JAN 23 1922
JAN 23 1922

JANUARY 1922.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

No. 1275

NEW YORK:
THE LEONARD SCOTT PUBLICATION CO.,
SARA PERRIN, PROP.
249 WEST 13TH STREET.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

...tered as second-class matter, July 3, 1917, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879

$5.00 Per Year. Single Copy, 50 Cents

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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCLXXV. JANUARY 1922. Vol. CCXI.

ECHOES FROM THE MARSHES.

(BEING FURTHER TALES OF THE MA'ADAN.)

BY FULANAIN.

BLACKMAIL.

It was on one of my infrequent expeditions to Basra that I noticed, lying beside the I.W.T. workshops, a dirty, disreputable, neglected little motor-launch. Its once white paint was brown and blistered, its once shining brass-work black; but none the less I looked at it with covetous eyes. No one else seemed to want it, and, indeed, it was so small that probably no one else could find a use for it. It must have been sent out to this country when the cry was going up for more and more river transport, on the off-chance of its proving useful. And now I hoped to supply the chance; for the greater part of the district of which I was Assistant Political Officer was composed of marshes, hitherto only navigated by native craft—challabiyahs, taradas, mashhufs, as the various types of pitched canoe are called. This tiny launch, with its shallow draught, would enable me to move about much more easily and quickly than before.

To my great satisfaction, I found on applying for the launch that my surmise had been correct. She was "nobody's child," and I had no difficulty in getting her allotted to me. It was a very spick-and-span little craft, gleaming with fresh white paint and polished brass-work, which set out a few weeks later on its maiden voyage into the marshes.

This was to be a voyage purely of discovery. I had never been farther than a day's journey into the wilderness of reeds and water, and now I

wanted to push straight across the marsh country, and see what lay on the other side. My guide was to be my old friend Haji Rikkan; but he frankly considered the object of my journey a childish one.

"More than once," he said, "have I reached the other side in my mashhuf, and there dwelt the same Arabs as ourselves, building the same reed huts, and tending the same buffaloes. Why should your honour travel so far for nought? I am ready to swear, by the Three Names of Allah, that this side and the other are as like as two grains of rice."

As I would not be dissuaded, Haji Rikkan decided in his own mind that I had some secret purpose; and it was true that, though really actuated by pure curiosity as to what lay beyond the marshes, I was always glad of an opportunity of seeing more of the Ma'adan themselves.

Secure in their islands among the high reeds, separated from civilisation and an interfering government by miles of unmapped swamp, the marsh Arabs live a life of primitive simplicity and primitive passions perhaps not far removed, except in time, from that lived by their ancestors of the ancient "Sea Land." Clad in the minimum of clothing, or in none, the marshman weaves his rush mats, builds his low arched hut, and tends his buffaloes; to slay his enemy and to steal whenever a chance presents itself, to rule his daily life strictly according to tribal custom, and to work no more than is necessary for a bare living, is roughly his code of social obligation.

The Ma'adan of my district seemed to lay special stress on the second of these duties. As daring and successful thieves they were unsurpassed, and the stretch of river running here through marsh country on both sides gave them continual opportunities of stealing from the Government boats which passed up and down. Now I hoped that my new acquisition, the little motor-launch, would enable me to learn more about these people at first hand, and so to discover how best to deal with their thieving propensities.

It was a clear fresh morning of late spring when the launch left the main river and struck into the Shatut Canal, which soon broadened out into wide open stretches of grey-brown water. Here, later in the year, would lie broad green fields of rice, but at present the flood water was still depositing its rich silt, on which the success of the future crop depended.

Gradually, as we went farther and farther from the river, the water became less muddy. We passed thick clumps of gossab, which grew larger and more frequent until they closed us in on both sides, and we found ourselves winding in and out of a tortuous little channel of deep clear water. Hidden securely from the sight of all but the marsh birds, which now and then flapped out of the reeds with angry cries at

our intrusion on their peace, we could see nothing ourselves but the thick walls of gossab. This reed furnishes the marsh Arab with his household fuel, and with the material from which he weaves mats to build his house, or to sell, through some such intermediary as Haji Rikkan, to the ordinary tribesman or town-dweller.

Now we felt the fresh breeze again in our faces, for we left the sheltering gossab and came out before a wide stretch of bardi: good grazing for the buffaloes this, and useful too for making ropes, and for placing against the walls of the frail reed huts to keep out the piercing winds of winter. The channel ran straight ahead, as far as the eye could see, as though it had been cut by the hand of man; and I learned some time later that it was indeed a remnant, the sole fragment left through the centuries, of one of the great irrigation canals which of old made Mesopotamia a fertile land. The little launch made her way with difficulty here, for the weeds were thick. Masses of pink-flowered "jat," a delicacy highly prized by the buffaloes, clustered round the stems of the reeds, and the surface of the water was completely covered by a tiny white flower, like wild strawberry blossom, which made so thick a carpet of bloom as to hide even its own leaves from sight. Here and there floated placidly the flat dull green leaves of the water-lily, its disappointing little flowers hardly visible.

Now we passed the first group of the small islands, "ishans" as they are called, on which the marsh Arabs live. They were deserted; only a few mud-ovens, round and smoke-blackened, showed that not long ago they had been busy centres of life. Small wonder is it that, living in such remote fastnesses in homes so easily and quickly moved, the Ma'adan felt safe to raid and rob without fear of reprisals from Government.

The bardi began to give place to mardi, which, in spite of the similarity of the names, is totally unlike its humbler brother. For the mardi is the giant of the marshes, towering above one's head to a height of fifteen or twenty feet, and provides the marsh Arab with the long stout poles with which he propels his mashhuf.

Suddenly breaking through the gloom of these silent, stately monarchs of the "Hor," we came upon a wide open sea, blue as the Mediterranean, and covered with "white horses." The wind, which we had not felt in the shelter of the mardi, was here a thorough-going gale, and Haji Rikkan was doubtful about crossing.

"Even danaks,[1] Sahib," he said, "are sometimes overturned in such a wind."

I reassured him as to the seaworthiness of our craft, and though it was clear that he had grave misgivings, he re-

[1] The largest type of boat used in the marshes.

signed himself, with a pious, "We are all in the hands of Allah!" to the venture. Rocking and tossing, and drenched to the skin with spray, we reached the other side in safety, and slid into the calm waters of a channel winding between walls of shabab—the tall reed from which the marshman makes the semicircular framework to support the rush mats of his hut. Only the waving and tossing of their silver feathery heads showed that above our sheltered little channel the wind blew as strongly as before.

Always changing from hour to hour as the little motor-boat penetrated more and more deeply into its heart, yet always the same, the quiet marsh opened its waterways to receive us. Like some Belle Dame sans Merci, it seemed to beckon us on and on, ever revealing fresh beauties, yet ever closing fast the way of retreat. Its towering ramparts rose silently behind us, as though, having once revealed to us the wonders of its inmost hidden life, the marsh would keep us ever in its embrace, lest we should go forth again and tell the secret of its winds and waters to the world outside.

Haji Rikkan was perfectly right: the far side of the marshes was exactly like the side from which we had come. The people differed in one respect only—living as they did far from the great river, they had never seen a motor-launch, or, for that matter, any self-propelled craft. Often, in the adventurous dreams of boyhood, I had fancied myself arriving in some unexplored part of the world with a motor-car or some other unknown mechanical contrivance, and pictured the amazement and curiosity of the people. Here, now, the dream was turned to reality. The people crowded to the banks to see, gazing eagerly, their fingers in their mouths. What would they think of this new species of boat, with its humming engine and polished brass? I listened for their remarks.

"Why," asked a puzzled voice, "does he paint his boat with milk?"

It was the only comment I heard. Life is full of disappointments!

. . . . . .

Our return journey next day was uneventful, until Haji Rikkan was moved to try a new route, which, like most short cuts, proved to be anything but short. We were delayed by thick weeds below the surface of the water, and had to stop repeatedly to disentangle the clinging strands from the propeller. The afternoon was drawing on, and it became obvious that we must find a sleeping-place for the night—a village if possible.

At last, getting clear of the weeds, we entered a long straight defile of water between high reeds. We were half-way up it when a birkash [1] entered

[1] A large mashhuf.

at the other end. But no sooner did its occupants see us than they seized their rifles, jumped from the boat into the shallow water, and dashed into the shelter of the reeds, through which we could hear them pushing and crashing their way. This seemed rather odd: why should two grown men flee in terror from the launch, at the sight of which the marsh-folk of our last night's halting-place had shown only curiosity?

The deserted craft was loaded with bardi. Were its owners genuinely dismayed at the launch's appearance, or was it a case of guilty consciences? As we slowed up to push the heavy black boat out of our way, I leaned over and pulled aside some of the bardi. Below it I saw four long poles. Without doubt, these were the telephone poles which a few nights earlier had been stolen from beneath the very nose of the sentry at the military post near my headquarters, and of which the disappearance had caused so much stir. I gave orders for the birkash, with its illicit load, to be towed behind the launch.

We had almost given up hope of finding an ishan on which to spend the night, when the sight of half a dozen grazing buffaloes told us that a village could not be far off; and within half an hour the launch was banking in beside a small mound.

Though it was almost sunset, not a man was to be seen in the tiny village. Only a few gaping women watched our arrival, and as I landed another came out of one of the reed huts and advanced to meet me.

"Enter," she said in a harsh clear voice. "Enter, in the name of Allah." Turning to the other women, she gave a string of rapid orders, which they hastened to obey. It was evident that she was accustomed to obedience.

In a very short time I was seated on a pile of rough cushions, and provided with the strong sweet tea of Arab hospitality. I learned that the name of my hostess was Awasha, and that she was the wife of Salim, headman of the Bait Aswad. Also I was allowed to gather that this same Salim was decidedly under the thumb of the energetic woman who chatted to me with such friendliness and lack of embarrassment.

A girl entered the hut and whispered in Awasha's ear, and I saw as she glanced hastily at me that a look of fear had replaced the confident expression in her eyes. Conversation languished, and she sat opposite to me in constrained silence.

Suddenly she seemed to come to some decision, and, rising to her feet, beckoned me to the far end of the hut.

"Look," she said, and showed me a little hammock made from a piece of sacking on which were plainly marked the letters "S. & T."[1] But

[1] Supply and Transport Corps.

the letters were nothing to Awasha; she was directing my attention to the tightly-swaddled baby sleeping in the hammock.

"New," she said. Even to my inexperienced eye that was plain.

"Boy or girl?" I asked.

"Boy," she proudly answered; and in reply to my question as to how many more she had, held up her open hand and pushed down the thumb and one finger: three more.

I could think of nothing more to say, but Awasha still stood looking at me expectantly. It was clear that something more was required of me. Suddenly divining what it was, I unknotted the school scarf round my neck, and handed it to her as a "dilla'a" or birth-gift for the baby.

Awasha was delighted. She hastened to the other end of the hut, to examine my offering in the better light of the doorway. School colours are usually bright, and mine were no exception to the rule. The vivid stripes appealed tremendously to Awasha. Holding it up close to her eyes, and then at a distance with her head cocked appreciatively on one side, she appeared enraptured.

By this time the look of fear had left her eyes, and inviting me to sit down again on the pile of cushions, she squatted beside me.

"The men of this Bait," she remarked in a confidential tone, "are poor creatures. I am but a woman, yet I drive them like cattle."

Having noticed her imperious manner towards the other women, I admitted that I was not surprised.

"Why do you take with you a mashhuf full of bardi?" she went on, and laughed delightedly when I told her what I had found in it.

"I believe you know who stole them," I hazarded.

She laughed again.

"Tell me."

"No, no, I am afraid," she said, though she certainly looked more elated than fearful, and I pressed her again to tell me the names of the thieves.

"If I tell you," she began hesitatingly, "shall I have your protection?"

I promised that she should come to no harm if I could prevent it.

"On your 'hadha wa bukht'—your word of honour?"

"On my 'hadha wa bukht.'"

"It was"—a barely perceptible pause—"I. All the men are my servants; when I am in need I send them forth, to fetch what they can."

"Then that is the reason," I said, "why there is not a single man in the village to-day?"

She nodded—then hastily added, "You promised, on your 'hadha wa bukht.'"

I was silent, wondering how best to deal with this self-confessed instigator of, probably, not a few of the raids and robberies which for so long had disturbed the peace of the district.

"Sahib," said the woman, and her voice was low and caressing, "I say to the men of this Bait, 'Rob,' and they rob; I say, 'Steal not,' and they do not steal. But if to every child I bring forth your honour will give a dilla'a such as this one"—she held up the gleaming square of silk—"then I will say, 'Steal not.'"

This was barefaced blackmail; but I basely fell in with Awasha's proposal. After all, governments submit far more readily than private individuals to blackmail—in fact, they have a special name for it; they call it "granting a subsidy." Why should not I grant a subsidy to this ruler of a troublesome marsh tribe? I agreed to send a silk scarf to every babe produced by Awasha.

A dilla'a, it may here be remarked, although the word has come to be used of any present made at birth, is, strictly speaking, the fourfold gift of a blue stone, a twig of difla, a piece of garlic, and a gold coin, threaded together and hung on the baby's forehead as protection against the Evil Eye: the first because its bright colour distracts attention from the child itself, the second because of its bitter taste, abhorred of spirits. What virtue is attached to the gold coin I have never discovered, but the explanation of the piece of garlic is simple: it causes the Evil Eye to water, and so lessens its malignity!

. . . . . .

A year or so later, a tall marsh Arab stopped me as I was leaving my office.

"Jabat Awasha," he said simply, "Awasha has brought forth."

She had kept to her bargain. During the whole year, not so much as a breath of suspicion had fallen on the Bait which she controlled with so firm a hand. I promised her messenger to give him the silk scarf on the following morning.

The next year, and the year after that, the same message was brought me, and the same dilla'a sent. After that I left.

I wonder if Awasha is still "bringing forth" with the same regularity? I wonder if the three little brown urchins, bedecked with my school colours, are as unpopular as was Joseph of old in his "coat of many colours"?

HASSAIN CHAOUSH.

A shabanah is (or rather was, for the term is now only a memory) an Arab who, presented by Government with a brass badge, a rifle, twenty or thirty rounds of ammunition, and the sum of twenty rupees a month, is placed at the disposal of the Political Officer for the maintenance of law and order in his district. If success can be considered to lie in the prevention of theft by ninety-nine persons, while the

hundredth, the shabanah himself, robs with impunity, then the shabanahs were certainly successful; but in the early days of the occupation it was disheartening to have to rely on this sort of irregular gendarmerie.

At one time shabanahs were posted in the trucks of the military supply trains running from Basra to Nasiriyah or Amarah to guard against marauders—until it was discovered that they were apt to push off sacks of barley, sugar, or flour as the trains passed their own villages. They were posted on the river transports, to ward off robbers from the marshes—until it became clear that an understanding had been reached by which the marsh Arab would get safely off with his spoil, while the shabanah, by opening fire some time later, would divert suspicion to some perfectly innocent section or village. Little mud forts were erected along the river bank, and manned by shabanahs with orders to fire on any suspicious-looking strangers; and their habit of levying toll on each and every passer-by was the last of these practices, as it was also the most lucrative, to be discovered by the authorities.

Yet, despite all these tendencies, there was good stuff in the shabanahs. They were finely built men, tough as leather, and extraordinarily cheerful and willing. Once they were placed under British officers whose whole time could be devoted to them, their good qualities were brought to the fore, while discipline killed off—or perhaps anæsthetised would be the truer word—their bad ones. Thus from the most unpromising material sprang up the very efficient Levy Force of to-day, a force which during the rebellion of last year did remarkably good work, so long as it was under the leadership of its British officers. Even in the early days, however, when the mere prospect of learning to drill was sufficient to make a shabanah bolt in deadly fear of being sent to "Lun'on" as a soldier, many cases occurred of fine devotion to duty,—witness that of Hassain Chaoush—Sergeant Hassain.

I was sitting outside my bungalow one hot sultry evening, lazily watching the river, my eyes fixed on a small black dot which I knew would in a few minutes resolve itself into a slender mashhuf making its way down-stream. Idly I speculated as to what it would contain. It would be full of fish perhaps, caught in the marshes some days ago, and now to be sold to the village Arabs and eaten with great relish in an advanced stage of decomposition; perhaps it was bringing "shelib,"[1] to be exchanged for the brightly-coloured cotton stuffs which the Arab women love; or it might be carrying a cargo of melons grown in some small patch of cultivation beside the river.

In the rays of the setting

[1] Unhusked rice

sun the stream looked like a sheet of flame, and it seemed to my indolent fancy that the little mashhuf would be consumed before it reached my bungalow. It was making very slow progress, and down-stream too; perhaps the heat of this oppressive evening had affected even the Arab who propelled it. I wondered if he might be my old friend Ahmad, who, fresh from another journey in the marshes with his boat-load of small groceries stored in empty petrol-tins, was coming to gossip with me about the wild tribes he knew so well. Or perhaps a whole family from the rice-fields were fleeing from the relentless oppression of one shaikh, to take up their abode under another who, they hoped, would prove a milder taskmaster; or it might be that shameless profiteer, Jusif, who used to make long journeys into the marshes to buy chickens for next to nothing, and sell them at outrageous prices for use in the military hospitals.

All my surmises were wrong. As the mashhuf floated slowly past the bungalow, the reason of its languid progress was evident: it was empty.

Others beside myself had noticed the drifting boat, and a village boy put off to pick it up. With swift strokes of the paddle he drove his own small craft to the middle of the stream, and rose to catch the high prow of the mashhuf. Then, with a shrill cry, he came paddling madly back again.

"Has he seen a tantal[1]?" asked a shabanah standing near me of his companion.

The boy landed not far from where I was sitting.

"Blood, blood!" he screamed, and fled to his hut.

I sent off three shabanahs to bring in the mysterious mashhuf. Lying in the bottom were two dead men; in the body of one was still a long curved dagger, while between them, in strange contrast to those grim still forms, lay a bundle, half-unrolled, of rich orange-coloured silk. Splashed with blood, crumpled and stained as though it had been clutched and struggled over, its shining folds were still beautiful, gleaming and shimmering in the sunset light—surely of the very essence of temptation to the colour-loving Arab.

The two men were lifted out of the mashhuf. Both wore the brass badge of my little force of shabanahs. The one with the dagger in his side was dead, but the other stirred and groaned as he was moved, and with regret I recognised him as Hassain Chaoush—with regret, apart from pity for his obviously dying condition, for he was one of the few shabanahs in whom I had any real confidence, and I was sorry to see him with that orange silk.

For some time past I had

[1] An evil djinn.

been making efforts to trace a roll of valuable silk, which had been stolen from a small steamer carrying civil merchandise up the river. I felt sure that this must be the missing bale; but how came it to be restored to me in this gruesome fashion, stained with the blood of two of my shabanahs? This, however, was not the time for conjecture; I sent for the Sub-Assistant Surgeon stationed in the little town, in the hope that it was not too late to save the life of Hassain Chaoush.

An hour later I was sent for. Hassain had recovered consciousness, and repeatedly asked to see me. Everything possible had been done, but the S.A.S. held out no hopes of his recovery. He thought, nevertheless, that the patient's request had better be granted.

Hassain had evidently been awaiting me with feverish anxiety.

"Sahib," he asked excitedly as I entered, "have you got it? Have you got the silk?"

"I have," I answered.

He drew a long breath, and sank back on the bed. "I will explain it all to you, Sahib," he said.

I tried to persuade him to lie still and rest, to let the explanation wait until the morrow.

"No, no, I must tell you now," he said, in such evident anxiety that it seemed best to let him talk. Often pausing to struggle for breath, his hoarse voice sometimes hardly audible, he told his tale.

"Sahib, we had all heard of the lost bale of silk, and your honour gave us all instructions to try to find out who had stolen it. By chance I heard of the thieves, and learned that they were in hiding on an ishan only a short distance into the marshes, waiting for a mahaila [1] to pass on her way up-stream, for they hoped to sell the silk to the nokhada. And I planned to go into the marsh and try to capture it from them, that I might bring it back in triumph to lay before your honour; but I said nothing, for I wished to gain that glory for myself and for Ridha, my cousin, who had agreed to accompany me.

"We left our nuqta before dawn; very quietly and stealthily, hardly moving, we approached the ishan. Peering through the reeds, we could just make out the thieves. Three of them there were; two seemed to be sleeping, the third was on guard with his rifle on the only channel leading up to the ishan. Silently, having seen all we needed to see, we made our way back a long distance, and discussed how we could best seize the silk. It seemed impossible: if we went up the channel, however quickly, the man on guard would shoot us; however quietly we crept through the reeds, our movements would be heard; nor could we get near enough to shoot with cer-

[1] The large sailing-boat of the Tigris and Euphrates.

tainty. At last Ridha said, 'The smaller the noise, the greater the danger; let us make a great noise as of buffaloes grazing.'

"So we agreed, and crashed in amongst the reeds, advancing towards the ishan and then retreating a little, but ever drawing nearer and nearer. At last we saw our opportunity, and rushed in. Two of the men we killed; the third escaped, and we troubled not to chase him, for there in the bottom of their mashhuf we found the stolen silk. Hastening back as fast as we might, before the third man could bring others against us, we reached the river, and set out on our way down-stream, O Hakim, to receive your words of praise and honour."

The hoarse hurried voice ceased, and Hassain drank thirstily from the cup I held for him. But he had more to tell, and would not rest until I had heard it all.

"As we went, Ridha unfolded a little of the silk. It was very beautiful, smooth and shining like the soft cheek of a bride, and there were many dhara'as. Ridha fingered it covetously.

"'By the son of Abi Talib,' he exclaimed, 'have we risked our lives only to give silk such as this, the price of many women, back to the Hakim?' He unfolded more and more. 'It were madness,' he cried, 'to give this up. Is it not ours by right? The Hakim need never know.'

"'Shame and dishonour would be ours,'" I said, and would not agree.

Hassan broke off to cough violently. His voice was growing very weak, and I tried again to persuade him to rest.

"No, no," he protested. "I have not told all yet. Ridha said, 'Let us keep half then, and restore half to the Hakim.' But I refused, and chided him roughly for his words. Whereupon he grew angry, and snatching at the silk tried to jump from the mashhuf; but I held it fast, and pulled him back. He turned on me, and drew his dagger. O Sahib, Sahib, I cannot breathe——"

Hassain made one more gasping effort at speech: "Did I well, Hakim?" and fell back dead.

Surely some one, in the Valhalla of brave Arabs, gave him the words of praise he longed so much to hear.

TRIMMING THE BALANCE.

The Bait Mahail and the Bait Sagar had for many years been at feud one with the other, but at last peace was to be made between them. The headmen had asked me to be present at the final ceremony, and I had agreed, but only on condition that the said ceremony took place at my headquarters. This was a departure from my usual custom of visiting the tribes in their villages; but in the first place,

the marshes in mid-July are not exactly inviting to a European, and in the second place, I was glad of the opportunity of inducing a few of these wild Ma'adan to leave their island fastnesses and see something of the world outside.

I promised the headmen that if they came in to the little town they should be my guests. This must not be interpreted too literally: it simply meant that I arranged with an eating-house keeper in the bazaar to supply everything they needed in the way of food and drink, keeping an account of what they had, and recognising them by the signed pass which each would produce.

The headmen of the two Baits duly arrived. Only one was missing, and it appeared that he had accompanied the others as far as the river bank; but when it came to boarding the P.S. 4, which I had arranged should pick them up and bring them the twenty odd miles down-stream to the town, his heart failed him, and he hastened back to the marshes. Indeed, the journey seemed to have been a great strain on the courage even of the bolder spirits, who had held to their purpose, for when the P.S. 4 banked in opposite my bungalow, from the expressions on their faces she might have been a floating tumbril, bearing fifteen or twenty of the Ma'adan to the guillotine.

Some weeks earlier I had sent my Arab assistant out to preside at a peace-making between two quarrelsome Baits; and when the next morning the reconciling of the Bait Mahail and the Bait Sagar was at last complete, I was reminded of his report. "After three hours' tongues fighting between parties," he wrote, "Rayat al Abbas as tied. Conclusion was fasl[1] made, and I fell sick of them and the time was 7.30 P.M."

I too had "fallen sick" of my guests, and had sent them to the huts of the shabanahs, to wait until an upgoing steamboat came to take them back.

Suddenly the sultry peace of the afternoon was broken by loud cries and angry shouting. Louder and fiercer grew the noise, and I went out to see what it was all about. On the river bank, a little way beyond the shabanah lines, a vigorous fight was in progress; the combatants, the headmen of the two Baits between which I had that very morning concluded a solemn peace!

Fortunately they had been forbidden to bring their rifles, which otherwise they would doubtless have used. As it was, they were making good play with sticks and clods of sun-baked earth. With difficulty they were separated by the shabanahs, and with equal difficulty prevented from resuming the battle.

When at length they were divided into two more or less orderly groups, I ordered the casualties to be produced. Each

[1] Agreement

Bait sent forward for my inspection the victims of the scuffle; and one by one, wearing the expressions of men at death's door, they exhibited their wounds.

I paired them off—a gashed head of the Bait Mahail with a cut cheek of the Bait Sagar, a bruised and blackened eye with a bleeding nose, and so on, until each victim had a partner in woe. At the end there was one man over, a red swollen weal across his back. Angry cries from the Bait Sagar people told me that he was one of their number; they swarmed forward, but I ordered them back, telling them that I would settle the matter myself.

Silence having been restored, I pointed to the paired-off casualties, and told the assembled headmen that their Baits were now on equal terms, with the exception of the man with the wounded back. It only remained for the Bait Mahail to produce one more of their number, to undergo such punishment as would sufficiently damage him for me to pair him off with the odd man of the Bait Sagar.

While the headmen still looked a little doubtful and uncomprehending, the matter was settled by two of my shabanahs. One seized the nearest unwounded member of the Bait Mahail, while the other brought down his stick with all his force across his shoulders; then they marched him triumphantly to stand beside his "opposite number" of the Bait Sagar.

It did more than put an end to the fight: it put the headmen of both Baits into high good humour. Suddenly seeing the point, they roared with laughter over this, to them, novel and speedy way of ending a dispute. Honour was satisfied; they had no excuse to go on fighting; each Bait had got as good as it had given. Over and over I heard the settlement explained, one greybeard telling another exactly what had happened, only to hear it all related afresh to him as soon as he had finished. The man who had been the unwilling instrument of ending the quarrel was the hero of the hour.

It is remarkable how willingly this sort of arbitrary trimming of the balance is accepted, even welcomed, by Arabs. I am afraid I cannot claim originality in settling the present dispute as I did, for some months earlier the Political Officer of a neighbouring division had employed a similar stratagem to avert what might have been a serious tribal fight. The story throws a rather amusing sidelight on the workings of the Arab mind.

According to the terms of his father's will, Shaikh Hatim had to give half a certain horse to the wife of his neighbour, Shaikh Shiyah. In this country, it should be remarked, a horse may be shared by several persons, one man owning a leg, or even a fraction of a leg; so it is not surprising that Hatim found that unwittingly he had already given away to

another person the half of this particular horse. As he could not without loss of honour take back a gift, he made the best amends he could to Shiyah by sending him instead a whole horse; this was accepted, and in course of time brought its new owner two foals. Shiyah then heard that the mare of which half should have been his had also borne two foals; and, being of a grasping disposition, he sent a message to Hatim, claiming the second of these as his by right. Naturally, he was reminded that having accepted a whole horse instead, he had no longer any claim to the first; whereupon he promptly returned to Hatim the mare and her two foals.

Now the return of a gift once accepted is counted by Arabs as a rank insult, and Hatim planned revenge. Living in his territory at the time was a certain Saiyid, who happened to have borrowed from Shiyah, for stud purposes, his famous horse Hargan, known as "the Shaikh of Horses," and justly the pride and delight of his master. This horse Hatim seized, and sent to the owner of a date-garden situated on the river which divided his lands from Shiyah's, with a letter saying that, as the shaikh had heard that he needed a horse for turning his naur,[1] this one was sent for the purpose; its mane and tail were to be cut, and the price of one hugga of dates (about fourpence) sent to Hatim in payment.

The unfortunate garden-owner found himself in a quandary. Not to use the horse would be to incur the wrath of Hatim; to do so would bring upon his head the vengeance of Shiyah. Finally, he decided to use it, for no broad river separated him from the strong arm of Shaikh Hatim.

Shiyah, as soon as news of this gross insult reached him, called his tribesmen together for a fight. Hatim did the same, and the two parties assembled on the opposite banks of the river. Shiyah had perforce to wait until mashhufs were collected in which to cross his men to the attack, and this delay gave the Political Officer time to act.

Despatching a letter by a swift messenger, he asked Hatim for the loan of the best of his mares, the famous Jumila. Now experience of Turkish times had taught Hatim that a loan to a Government official was in reality a bribe, never to be returned, and having had little experience of the ways of British officers, he was not at all willing to "lend" Jumila. Still, his insult to Shiyah seemed likely to have more serious results than he had anticipated, and it was desirable to propitiate the Political Officer if possible. He sent off the mare without delay.

As soon as she arrived, the Political Officer set off with half a dozen sowars, and halted at a water-wheel a little

[1] Water-wheel for irrigation purposes.

way down-stream of the place at which Shiyah was assembling his people. Across the river, the angry tribesmen could see Hargan, the Shaikh of Horses, his mane and tail clipped and his eyes blindfolded with a piece of sacking, plodding round and round in a circle, while the buckets with their load of water came up one by one. Already they were "making hosa," threatening vengeance for this intolerable insult to their shaikh, while Hatim's men, on their side of the stream, shouted taunts and invitations to battle.

At the unexpected sight of the Political Officer, Shiyah's men ceased their war-dance, and the shaikh himself hastened to meet him, dismay on his countenance.

"Can you wonder, O Hakim," he began self-excusingly, "that my men will not heed me when I try to restrain them, that they are spoiling for a fight, when they see my horse Hargan, the Shaikh of Horses, toiling at a water-wheel? By Allah, it is a disgrace too heavy to be borne—a disgrace greater than any man has heard of before."

"Disgrace?" said the Political Officer; "how can that be, when Jumila herself, the Queen of Mares, is doing likewise?" He pointed to the water-wheel at which he had halted, where a blindfolded horse was just beginning her monotonous round.

Shiyah stared, ran to look closer, then burst into a great laugh, and hastened to tell his tribesmen.

Thus there was no fighting, but laughter and goodwill on both sides. Hatim presented Jumila to Shiyah, who acknowledged the gift by the present of Hargan; and for at least six months there was friendship between the two shaikhs—almost a record, as friendship between shaikhs is reckoned!

. . . . . .

The boat which was taking my guests away arrived an hour later. As it moved off, I could see them still chuckling over the events of the afternoon, still relating the story one to another, and I laughed at the simplicity of these children of the marsh. But he laughs loudest . . .

Two or three days afterwards I was presented with a bill, the size of which made me open my eyes. Could a score of people, even if they were Ma'adan, possibly have eaten so much in the space of two days? A few inquiries showed that my doubts had not been groundless. My "simple children of the marsh," after making hearty meals themselves, had loaned out their passes, for a small consideration, to others not of their number, until such time as they felt capable of themselves making another attack on the provisions!

Verily are Arabs and Jews alike the sons of Shem!

VAGABOND IMPRESSIONS.

BY ST JOHN LUCAS.

MUSIC AND MEMORIES.

"Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory. . . ."

THERE are many glorious and delightful advantages to be derived from the simple fact that one is not a musician, and perhaps the chief of them is that any one outside the musical pale can indulge to the full in the never-failing, ever-enthralling, dear drowsy vice of romantic association. The true musician, with his ear always on the alert for technical particularities, and with all his faculties concentrated fervently on the succession and development of themes—what does he know of the soft joys which belong to a listener who is both ignorant and indolent? His mental condition, so far as I can judge it, is most unenviable; to concentrate on good music is an acute physical and intellectual strain, and to listen to bad music is torture to him. Thrice and four times happy they to whom music is not a Thing in Itself, but a kind of incantation which evokes sweet or poignant memories—sunset over the Adriatic, the rain-washed stones of Venice beneath the midnight moon, the eyes of fair women, the song of the wind on the moor. When these fortunate people go to concerts, they go for the purpose of hearing old music which is associated in their minds with pleasant places and delightful days, and they have one great advantage over the real musician—bad old tunes may also have romantic associations for them, Christmas carols and foolishness from defunct comic operas, even hymns.

Is this immoral? Is it as wicked as to go to one of the great picture-galleries and to rejoice at finding a Rembrandt portrait that resembles Aunt Matilda or a landscape that reminds one of the dear old home in Upper Tooting? I refuse to believe it; but even if I am convicted of living in a state which, I think, the Roman Catholic Church denounces as wilful and corrupt ignorance, I shall continue to listen to certain musical compositions primarily, at any rate, for the sake of old associations. There is a Clarinet Quintet by Mozart—performed too seldom—which I rarely miss hearing: a divine work, but specially dear to me because it

brings memories of the beloved Oxford of a quarter of a century ago, when, as a freshman, I heard it played at the Musical Club, in the long badly-lit upper room where the signed portraits of Joachim and Paderewski peered through the mist of tobacco smoke, and the spirit-lamps that were passed round to obviate the striking of matches had an orientally ecclesiastical aspect. Chopin's nocturnes and waltzes, any Beethoven sonata in the first volume of the Peters edition, pianoforte transcriptions of 'Don Giovanni,' 'Tannhäuser,' 'Der Fliegende Holländer,' 'Carmen,' Gilbert and Sullivan *passim*, and songs by Schubert and Schumann—any of these takes me back to a room in college, over the cat-haunted Fellows' Garden, with Morris wall-paper and photographs of Burne-Jones' and Rossetti's paintings—the Rombrong room as it was facetiously termed by the profane: home of argument and laughter. At that time, too, we were often in London for the new Symphony concerts, when Sir Henry Wood was dosing us, perhaps even over-dosing us, with Wagner excerpts and Tschaikowsky's 'Symphonie Pathétique.' I have no particular affection left now for fragments of the 'Ring,' but I never hear the 'Tannhäuser' Overture, the Spinnenlied from the Dutchman, or the 'Pathétique' without seeing the then unglorified aspect of Queen's Hall, with its glaring lights and snarling beast of an organ, or without feeling the first fierce joy of a great new experience, combined with a sense of the strangeness and vastness of London, in those days an unknown and infinitely mysterious city. Sausages and lager beer at Pagani's and a jingling hansom to Paddington in the lamp-sown dusk wound up the wonderful occasion.

That was the time when one first heard great music, but earlier experiences of commonplace tunes probably haunt most people. I spoke disparagingly of hymns, and certainly many of them are sentimental and vapid: as a boy I was made miserable by Ewing's "Jerusalem the Golden" and Stainer's (I think it is Stainer's — at any rate he racked my young soul with his sevenfold Amen) "Pleasant are Thy Courts Above"—an abominable tune. I hear hymns now somewhat rarely, yet whenever I listen to "O God, our Help" sung — at a College Gaudy or some other masculine gathering—by male voices in unison, I am carried back most poignantly to the service in the School Chapel on the last night of every term, and feel again the sentimental uplifting engendered, it is to be feared, almost entirely by the prospect of the holidays. But I remember, at least, that half an hour later we would all be singing "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" in the dormitory—a tune which,

if I could hear it now, would awaken no sensations other than murderous. Hymns, too, heard at the funeral of a schoolfellow, or in small country churches with the door opening on hedgerows and twilit fields, still have power to haunt the memory. "I waited for the Lord" was always played as a voluntary on Easter Sunday at early school chapel, and when I hear it now I seem to sit again under a painted dome near an open door that gave a glimpse of the Terrace field, with a happy sense that winter was over, and that life had begun again; also with a happy sense that the somewhat devastating compulsory spiritual gymnastics of Holy Week were definitely of the past.

Other hymn-tunes have more facetious associations — "Ten thousand times ten thousand" for instance, which was always sung *sotto voce* by persons who had not the honour of being in the choir :—

"Ten thousand times ten thousand,
Ten thousand times ten thou;
Ten thousand times ten thousand times
Ten thousand thousand thou!"

A parody from which, alas! I shall never escape. Another, sung on route-marches in my regiment to the tune of "The Church's One Foundation," and beginning, "We are Fred Karno's Army," is equally distressing in its abiding potency.

It seems to me now that the school band must have practised the overture to 'Fra Diavolo' on one evening a week throughout my sojourn; but I suppose that in reality its activities were wider. The band played slightly out of tune with truly diabolical energy, and all the desks in the empty Big School used to rattle like the bones of the dead in Ezekiel. When I revisited the school during the summer holidays many years later, I peered into the great bare hall and distinctly heard a phantom orchestra pounding out that too familiar prelude to an opera now, happily, obsolete.

"Tipperary" has associations, usually unpleasant, to most people who served in the Great, or as O'Flaherty, V.C., preferred to call it, the Big War. To me it recalls with intense vividness an evening when I crossed over to France. We had embarked on the transport in a blinding blizzard of snow, but as we approached the French coast the sky cleared and the lean black shapes of the destroyers which escorted us were silhouetted stark against a watery yellow sunset. The men on the boat sang that detestable song, but I was surprised to observe, when we reached the French harbour, that a draft on another transport did not add their voices to the music, but merely regarded us in sardonic silence. A sergeant-major explained.

"They've been 'ere before," he said.

Samuel Butler quotes somewhere a poem of military char-

acter, consisting simply of the following lines :—

"The battle of the Nile.
I was there all the while.
I was there all the while
At the battle of the Nile.
The battle of the Nile . . ."
&c., *ad lib.*

Equally haunting, soothing, simple, and satisfactory was a song that no one who has been on route-marches will easily forget :—

"Old soldiers never die,
Never die, *never* die ;
Old soldiers never die" . . . &c.

Bitter-sweet memories ! as a comrade-in-arms remarked to me after enumerating the public places of refreshment in the Whitechapel Road during a temporary but total drought in Italy. The harsh voices singing in unison or, sometimes regrettably, in harmony, the tramp of heavy feet, the inevitable reek of Army leather —how vividly a boy whistling one of the old tunes beneath the window can recall those strange days ! Oddly enough, the only good music which takes me back to them consists of two very different specimens of the art—the first bars of the César Franck sonata for violin and piano, and the grim ballad of the "Twa Corbies." I heard the former on the evening of 3rd August 1914 in a Chelsea drawing-room, when we were—waiting, and when it was finished the violinist suddenly lifted up her voice and sang the latter very beautifully. The song haunted me like a heart-ache for many months and in many places, and to hear it or the sonata now is to live again through those grisly hours of suspense.

A certain airman, whose very interesting reminiscences appeared some time ago in 'Maga,' confessed that when he was on the verge of some serious disaster he was obsessed by the noble verse :—

"In the poor but 'onest 'ome
Where 'er 'umble people live,
They drink the dry champagne she sends,
But never, never can forgive."

(Sung, I believe, to a hymn-tune.) I mentioned this fact to a friend of mine who had been through a great amount of fighting, and he artlessly admitted that on various occasions when he had apparently been in the very jaws of death he found himself warbling a ribald ditty of his youth, one verse of which ran :—

"Cerulea was beautiful, Cerulea was fair ;
She dwelt with her grandma in Bloomsbury Square ;
She was once my ickly-oodlyums, but now, alas ! she
Plays kiss-a-kiss with the officers in the Artillerree."

This gross libel on a respectable district in London and on an honourable branch of His Majesty's Service apparently only arose from his subconscious mind in moments of stress. He had completely forgotten it before the war.

Italy, especially in the districts unfrequented by tourists,

is still the home of song; in the Casentino you can hear the *rispetti* and *stornelli* that Lorenzo de' Medici loved and imitated, and in Calabria and Sicily the shepherds pipe to their flocks as they did in the days of Theocritus. *Et ego in Arcadia.* . . . I have listened to Daphnis and Menalcas, and heard the song of La Nencia da Barbarino:—

"Io sono stato a Empoli al mercato,
A Prato a Monticelli a San Casciano,
A Colle a Poggibonsi a San Donato
E quinamonte insino a Dicomano. . ."

Yet—painful confession of a Philistine in music—if I could hear those delightful airs again, they would recall the loveliness of Italy less than certain familiar tunes — Strauss waltzes mainly—which were played in Rome on the road leading from the Trinità de' Monti to the Pincian by three blind musicians, who were led away at the end of the performance by a very hairy, dirty ruffian with a never-failing supply of jokes which always made them laugh. The 'Blue Danube' and 'Doctrinen' take me straight back to that incomparable city, with the sun setting behind St Peter's, and the pines and the ilexes and the twin towers of the Trinità all flushed with a heavenly roseate glow, the scent of flowers and warm earth, the throb and wheeze of violin, 'cello, and clarinet, and the pathetic group of musicians with their ever-cheerful *cicerone*. The blatant strains of 'Avanti Savoia' and 'Santa Lucia,' at one time far too familiar, revive sharp memories of brilliant winter mornings in the Via Gregoriana, where they were played with immense *brio* on a kind of shawm by a young peasant from the Abruzzi, who was accompanied by a fierce-eyed old man with a bagpipe which looked like a white pig, and emitted appropriate grunts and groans. The even more blatant 'Funiculi funicula' recalls, not the slightly frowsy splendour of Naples, but the serene greys and purples of evenings on Como, when its notes were poured forth incessantly from the passionate heart of a penny-in-the-slot organ in a fortunately distant *osteria* on the Punta d'Avedro.

These are only a few instances of the sentimental advantages of being unmusical. When I read Dr Ethel Smyth's memoirs (one of the most delightful books ever written by any one, musician or otherwise), I was interested to observe that she shows no trace of possessing, or at any rate of exercising the faculty of romantic association with regard to her art; in spite of her intensely impressionable temperament, her sense of humour and her richly stored memory, she seems, like many musicians whom I have known, to keep an attitude to music that is absolute; to her, doubtless, it is keenly suggestive, not associative. I envy her all her gifts except this immunity from my own (in her opinion) ridiculous weakness; she will never know the

fatuous bliss of the duffer who attends concerts in order to wallow in sentimental memories, and bad music will merely make her cross. Higher joys —the highest—no doubt are hers; but, such being denied me, I cling to my base delights—*je bois dans mon verre.* It will never, I trust, be empty; only a few evenings ago, in a Pall Mall club, a friend who is wise in such matters was talking to me about Spanish tunes, and happened to hum a few bars of a Castilian folk-song. Instantly the scene changed: the gaiters of the Bishop vanished; the portraits of the Eminent wavered and grew dim; the voice of the bald old gentleman wheezing hoarse chestnuts to a suffering friend died away. I was transported to a long low cellar that smelt of garlic and smoky lamps and was hung with dried gourds and hams and onions. Once again I heard the castanets and the guitar, and a woman's voice singing that fierce and passionate music; once again I saw the swarthy and savage beauty of La Magdelena,—but that is a reminiscence far too sacred for cold print.

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THROUGH ALL THE LAND DEBATABLE.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL P. R. BUTLER, D.S.O.

WHEN, at the end of May, orders reached us in Cologne that we were to be sent to stop the fighting in Upper Silesia, everybody felt that we might be in for almost anything. The interposition, between two closely-confronted armies, of a relatively tiny British force was full of interesting possibilities.

What an appeal to the imagination! A British battalion moving, complete in every detail, across the breadth of Germany, to restore peace to a remote province, and so discount one ill effect of Germany's war—British soldiers crossing the battlefield of Leipzig and the Elbe—and, in this particular case, the same soldiers who had gone the year before to Eastern Prussia, and unfurled *en route* their colours on the railway platform of Warsaw!

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The first few days in Upper Silesia were days full of expectancy. They were passed, by such battalions as had arrived, in the untidy villages around Oppeln, along the Oder, with the sound of distant cannonading in the air, and amid great heat. It was an undistinguished bit of country, not at all a foretaste of that which was to come—miles of featureless corn-fields, sweltering in the sunshine, and every here and there great clumps of cement factories, unfinished-looking, but at work. The villages were apportioned between Poles and Germans in a way that was instructive. Along their main street the houses were inhabited by Germans; the poorer back streets were exclusively Pole—the influential minority Germans, the toiling majority Poles. These few preliminary days were spent in intensive training; but there were one or two rather amusing diversions, and among these must be reckoned the incident of the Polish marriage feast of Frauendorf.

The companies were billeted in barns, which stood at the back of the living-houses. The entrance to one of the latter was seen, on our arrival, to be decked with a miniature evergreen triumphal arch, bearing an inscription of welcome and goodwill. These amenities turned out, however, to be intended, not for us, but for a happy couple that had just been wedded in the local church. It is impossible to keep the British soldier from fraternising with all and sundry wherever he goes, in spite of prohibitions; and so it must be counted to the credit of the discipline of the particular company in question that, when the wed-

ding festivities were at their height, only one soldier found his way into the banquet-hall. He, however, was a tremendous success, sang an Irish song, and gave a finished exhibition of a clog-dance. Alas! the company sergeant-major was for once deficient of a sense of humour, and Private O'Hara was brought up on report next morning for "creating a disturbance in a civilian house!"

On a Sunday afternoon, at the very end of May, the officers of the same battalion were seeking a little repose and some shelter from the merciless sun, in a small orchard. Valises were stretched under the trees, and those who were not reading were asleep. There were innumerable gnats about, and the distant booming of the guns was vaguely menacing. . . . Suddenly the field-telephone rang. The battalion was to move by lorry at dawn. It was to get between the insurgent Poles and Germans, and keep them from each other's throats.

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A string of motor-lorries, packed with British infantry, headed south-east from Oppeln. The day had, mercifully, broken cool and cloudy. On the box-seat of each vehicle, between the driver and the officer, sat a French soldier, clutching his long rifle. His "horizon-blue" uniform made a spot of colour all down the column. These were to be our mascots and (perhaps) our safe-conduct through the Polish lines. We conjectured that the French, advancing from another point through the German lines, had in their turn a splash of khaki on each of their *camions*.

As the column rolled forward upon its three hours' journey to the front, the character of the country began to alter. The belts of forest became deeper, with now the sombreness of pines, now the clear shadiness of beech and birch. All along the route the people acclaimed us as their deliverers. To them, the tillers of the soil and the small trades-people of the villages, it signified little what label was theirs, or to whom they would have to pay their taxes. They only wanted to live in peace. One thought of France of 1914, when, as one sped onward in the troop-train towards the front, the old men working in the fields would wave their hats, and then draw an earthy forefinger across their gullets, pointing in the direction of the invader. Things were different now.

After a time many of the once familiar signs of war's destructiveness began to show — pillaged houses, broken bridges, exploded cross-roads. And then, all of a sudden, the column came to a stop. The leading lorry had been held up by a trench and barricade across the road; and behind the barricade there stood a crowd of Poles, their rifles at the present.

Practically everything that

can now happen to one on service has had its counterpart, at one time or another, in an experience gone through in the Great War. When, therefore, the writer saw what was holding up the column on this Upper Silesian road, his thoughts flew back to an incident which occurred in Salonika shortly after the British force had landed there. A small party of our troops was marching along the Seres road for the first time, when it was held up by a Greek piquet. The corporal in command of the latter informed the British officer that nobody was allowed along that road. He said it with the air of a man determined to die rather than betray his trust. So the British party just moved round off the road to one side, regaining it a few yards farther on. Both sides were completely satisfied.

And here, in Silesia, very much the same thing happened. The lorry column, packed with its grinning men, wheeled off to the right, and, following a slight deviation, regained the road farther on, with nothing more unpleasant than some extra jolting.

We were now well within the zone of hostilities, and Polish irregular troops were dug in all along the road. There are degrees of irregularity, and these irregulars—outwardly, at any rate—were about as irregular as any military body could be. Scarcely any of them were completely in uniform, but nearly all wore some article of equipment, or portion of what once might have been full dress. One man sported a blue lancer cap, with a Norfolk jacket and grey flannel trousers; many wore bowlers, with "field-grey" tunics. They looked as though they had hurriedly clothed themselves from the wardrobe of a rifled provincial theatre. But their arms seemed in good order, and their earthworks bristled with machine-guns. Their demeanour towards the British troops was not unfriendly, except for surly looks on the part of some. They all looked very hungry. Our lorries thundered on, and as they dipped down into the valley wherein lay Ujest—their destination, between the opposing armies—a shell screamed overhead and burst beyond that village, by whom fired, and for whom intended, one would have been puzzled to say.

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The country in the west central portion of Upper Silesia might at first sight be thought merely undulating, and to consist entirely of alternate tracts of forest and corn-land. It is true that, save for the beautiful Annaberg, which rises to some 2000 feet from the level plain, it has no heights. But here and there it is seamed with unexpected valleys, which wind for miles, and in which nestle, amid orchards and along the banks of pellucid streams, tiny retiring villages. Such a place is Alt Ujest.

I shall always remember this

little spot as it was on the evening in June when I saw it last—the sun sinking at the end of its single street, and its workers, man and beast, returning from their labours in the hay-fields. The air clear as crystal, the smell (more than the smoke) of wood fires, the file of black-and-white Holstein cattle stopping to drink below the bridge, the piles of new-mown hay. On either side of its valley the corn-clad slopes swelled upwards, broken only by sunken tracks, which led, bordered by wild flowers, to the outer world. Brooding peace was over everything. . . . Only ten days before we had marched in along that valley with the shells whistling overhead. On our right, behind one ridge, lay the Polish army; on our left, behind the other, the German. Their outposts watched each other across the dip. How the miracle was worked I do not know; but the arrival of our little force—small, but resolute—had the same effect here as elsewhere along the line. The fighting ceased. Many were the alarms, and very thorough the precautions; but the peace which we had brought endured.

Alt Ujest was a humble village, though agriculturally rich. Its houses were small, but each possessed a carefully-kept spare room, in which a British officer, once he had forced open the closed double windows and established the ritual of the daily bath, might live in comparative comfort. A multitude of geese, ducks, and hens shared the remaining accommodation with the owners. The rank and file were billeted in the *gasthaus* and in roomy barns.

Like all the agricultural villages, Alt Ujest was mainly Polish; but it contained a few German families. In the house of one of these we installed our company mess. It was impossible not to be on friendly terms with these simple kindly folk. "What sort of persons are these, that they, who are *officers*, should deign to speak to us?" was the astonished question I heard the owner of our mess put to his wife. All the inhabitants of these villages are Catholics, and their houses full of pious objects. Their taste is, however, a little crude. The chief embellishment of my room, for instance, was a large framed photograph of a baby in its coffin. Peasant dress is worn only by the old women, who on Sundays wear beautiful cashmere shawls; though the young women, at weddings, funerals, and christenings, bedeck their thickly-coiled and plaited hair with garlands of evergreen, and wear a distinctive costume.

As to our military precautions, it is sufficient to say that our piquets held the sides of the valley, and that we patrolled freely. Piquets and patrols were always partly composed of French and partly of British (we had a French detachment with us). By this means anybody molesting a

patrol or piquet would find himself confronted partly by (supposed) friends, and partly by (supposed) enemies. But no attacks took place.

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The process by which the little Allied force got elbow-room, and the opposing armies were induced to retire to their respective confines, need not be more than touched on here. Suffice it to say, that where much tact was called for, it was readily forthcoming. It was also triumphantly successful. By degrees the country for whose security we became responsible grew wider and still more wide. And what a country! All that brains, enterprise, and energy can do has been done for it. Its stately forests and teeming fields are traversed by splendid roads. It possesses a most efficient canal and irrigation service. The proceeds of the sale of the fruit which grows in a double line of trees along the highways goes towards paying the expenses of their upkeep. This year the trees were weighted down with cherries, mile after mile. In spring the blossom must be a very beautiful sight.

In measure as the rival forces withdrew, was the scope of our activities widened and our horizon enlarged. Detachments, instead of being strung out in a line of posts, were moved to important villages in an ever-increasing zone. From the western edge of the little valley of the "Jordan"—the stream that flows through Alt Ujest and Ujest—one got a view across the fertile country to where the blue Bohemian mountains melted into distance. Everywhere the hay was being cut and carted. Patches of rye, growing to well over seven feet high, oats, wheat, and rape, alternated with forests as far as the eye could see; and never a hedgerow anywhere—just delicately-defined changes in the shade of green, according to the nature of the crop. And over everything a glorious sun, with generally a tempering breeze from the Carpathians.

Billets began to vary now, and each type had its own peculiar interest. One saw the life (and it was astonishing how quickly it revived) of country town, of *gut*, and of *schloss*. They are picturesque little burgs, the country towns of Upper Silesia, but their drainage systems leave much to be desired. If their predominating tint is grey, it is the white grey, not the black. Their streets are narrow and cobbled, but straight. They always can boast a roomy market-place, called the *ring*, and their church has a lofty and graceful spire, which can be seen for miles. They deal mostly in agricultural goods and produce, and though the majority of the names above the shops are Polish, it by no means follows that the bearers of those names are anything else but German. Opalla, Kaczmarczyk, Kupka, Pyka, Wieczorek, Tomschick, Kukofka are

typical names to be met with in all the towns. They do not look very pretty to our eyes, and there seems to be something fitting about Cilly Namm, which is the name over a shop in the *ring* at Gros Strehlitz.

A billet in one of the little towns such as Ujest would usually be in the house of a German family, where everything would be done to make one comfortable, and the only drawback the never-ending smell of cooking. One's rooms were invariably clean, with the universal double windows, necessitated by the biting cold of winter. An enormous tiled slow-combustion stove was a prominent feature of every room. The owners were always friendly, and their children, who swarmed, adored the British soldier. At the first streak of dawn the whole household would be out, young and old, to their labour in the fields, driving out in a huge cart drawn by two lean wild-eyed horses, and not returning until dark.

When one was on detachment the company officers' mess was in a separate building, and never composed of more than four members; but at Ujest there occurred one of the rare opportunities of running a battalion mess. This was established in the *schloss*, and we shared it with the officers of a famous French *chasseur* regiment. The *schloss* of Ujest is in reality a glorified hunting-box, belonging to Prince Hohenlohe, the owner of half the countryside. It stands upon a slight eminence overlooking the town, and has about it an indescribably feudal air. It contains many fine hunting trophies, and a series of valuable sporting prints. Its great, dark, panelled hall, wide oak staircase, and lofty banqueting-hall were romantic to a degree. What would the gay carousing parties of its prime have said had they been told that some day French and British uniforms would assemble round that board?

Life in a *gut* was charming also. A *gut* is a large country-house and farmstead combined. It, too, has much that is feudal about it. As a rule it is situated right out in the country, in the middle of a "dominion," or large estate. It is a compact collection of huge barns, stables, coach-houses, and machinery sheds, grouped round a spacious open *hof* or courtyard, and forming three sides of a square, whose remaining side is occupied by the dwelling. In this live the overseer and his family. Attached to the dwelling are offices, veterinary establishment, dairy, laundry, garage, and power-house. The offices are connected with the nearest town by telephone. The whole forms a self-contained unit, giving employment to hundreds of families. These *guts* are invariably run by Germans, the labour being done by Poles. Employer and employed appear, however, to be on the best of terms, in spite

of the unrest so wantonly stirred up by recent happenings. Many *guts* are sited on commanding ground: with their thick outer walls, loop-holed windows, and massive foundations they have something about them suggestive of a mediæval fortalice.

In the village of Salesche we lived in one of these. The living-house was a pleasant place, cool and clean. Its rooms were large and airy, and it boasted a good bathroom, with hot water laid on. At the back of the house was a shady verandah, opening on to a garden full of flowers and fruit. Tall vases and bowls full of foxgloves stood about the dining-room, and our rations were supplemented by unlimited strawberries and cream, not to mention the more solid fare represented by ducks and chickens. New-laid eggs were three for a penny. All ranks agreed that the *gut* was "bon."

The house, however, had had a narrow escape a few days before our arrival. A German shell, fired at it while the Poles were in occupation, had cut a small tree in two just outside the drawing-room, and had then struck the outer wall and failed to explode. It was still lying where it had fallen. Two other shells had fallen in the *hof*, killing a Polish soldier and a farm-hand. This *hof* made an ideal drill-ground for our men, and on it they initiated the youth of the place into the mysteries of football.

In spite of the depredations of Korfanty's followers, Salesche *gut* was still a very prosperous one. It was pleasant of a summer's evening to wander round the byres and stables and study the working of the farm. In one long shed there was housed a prize herd of Holstein cattle, all black and white, and looking precisely alike. Their numbers had been sadly depleted by the insurgents, but they nevertheless totalled over eighty. In the roof of their shed were dozens of swallows' nests, with the young birds all hatched out. It was pretty to watch them lining the edge of the nests, while the mother birds flew to and fro, picking flies off walls and ceiling to feed to them. The fledglings were also black and white, as if in imitation of the cows.

It was an existence, however, by no means deficient in excitement. Both Poles and Germans were constantly appealing to the British for protection. One night there were shrill ululations outside the house. They proceeded from a poor old woman whose son had just been kidnapped by a band of German raiders. We did what we could, but to no purpose. Another time a Pole was captured with two live bombs secreted on his person. He was in the act of breaking into the local butcher's shop. Salesche was a straggling village, over a mile in length, and the most one could do, with the forces at one's disposal, was to maintain an in-

lying piquet and to send out frequent patrols. Raiding parties on both sides, working with silence and despatch, and perfectly conversant with the lie of the land, could bring off an occasional coup with impunity.

On another occasion a platoon had been detached to a smaller outlying village whence a family had sent word that one of the sons had been taken away and murdered the previous night. The relatives had found the body buried under a few inches of earth, and had brought it home. They said they were certain the murderers would return that night to seize another son. So to the subaltern in charge of the platoon was given the task of occupying their cottage until daylight.

Over this ghastly "kill"—for they found the body laid out when they arrived—the subaltern and his men sat up during the whole of that short June night, hoping in vain for the return of the raiders.

Then ensued a few days of extraordinarily interesting work. It fell to the lot of certain officers to visit the headquarters, now of the one belligerent, now of the other, and to persuade them to continue their retirement. It says a great deal for the good sense of both combatants that they hearkened fairly readily to these counsels. It also says much for the prestige of the Allied arms. One Irish field officer always declared that he had, without any knowledge of their language, persuaded the Poles to retire ten kilometres by repeating to them the words "gin" and "Dublin." *Djien dobre* in Polish signifies "good morning."

To the writer there once fell the task of visiting the German insurgent headquarters of a particular portion of the line, and explaining that we wished their forces to withdraw from a certain belt of wood.

Out from our lines the little party of officers and householders rode, through our outposts, and down the long straight road that led from Ujest to Slawentzitz. After a few hundred yards the German outposts were reached. We pulled up and explained that we desired to see the general. After some hesitation a man, half in uniform, half in civilian garb, said he would conduct us to headquarters, and jumped upon a bicycle. We entered Slawentzitz by a circuitous route, to avoid the blown-up bridge across the river, and followed the cyclist into the grounds of Prince Hohenlohe's *schloss*, where the German headquarters were established. It was a magnificent, if flamboyant, country-seat, situated in a beautifully laid-out park. Over the entrance were the Hohenlohe arms, bearing the motto, *ex flammis orior*. One wondered how soon it might not be giving the lie to its own boast. Steel-helmeted sentries

were on duty round the house, who punctiliously saluted us.

No time was lost in admitting us to the presence of the general. We found him and his staff poring over maps in a small room leading off the hall. They, too, were dressed more in mufti than in uniform, in what might without offence be styled "ratcatcher" hunting-kit; but they wore their Iron Crosses and badges of rank. The interview was not particularly cordial; but then one had no reason for expecting it to be. It was asking a good deal to request these people to withdraw, considering all the circumstances. In the end, however, we obtained all that we wanted. The general kindly lent us an orderly to show us the way to the wood in question, and we took our leave.

Some weeks afterwards the withdrawal upon either side had been so faithfully carried out, and had progressed so far, that our own brigade headquarters were able to be established in Prince Hohenlohe's *schloss*, and the Union Jack was flying from its flagstaff.

On a lovely summer's day I rode over from my *gut* to visit it. One now had ample opportunity to admire its magnificent rooms. There are many of these palatial residences scattered up and down the country. On the whole, both sides seem to have spared them. It is a little puzzling that the wealthy Prussian families should have chosen to build these expensive seats so near to the Polish border; but the explanation is probably to be found in the excellence of the hunting. Also, the present situation could scarcely have occurred to any German potentate in the proud old pre-war days!

Prince Hohenlohe's *schloss* at Slawentzitz is only one of his residences, but it is full of beautiful and costly things. The drawing-room, when I saw it, contained many interesting historical portraits by such artists as Kreul, Weygandt, G. Taubert, George des Marées, and Lauchert. There was a spirited portrait of Frederick William of "Borussia," and the titles under all of them had a fine old ring about them (one must admit it): Christine Charlotte Sophie, Fürstin von den Osten Sacken; Marianne, Erbprinzessin zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, geboren Gräfin von Hoym; Pauline, Fürstin zu Hohenlohe-Ohringen, geboren Prinzessin zu Fürstenberg — *sunt lacrymæ rerum.*

The Kaiser used frequently to accept Prince Hohenlohe's hospitality at this *schloss*, for the hunting and shooting. In the smoking-room I noticed two large framed photographs depicting him and his host setting out for a day's shooting—outriders, postilions, fine liveries, spanking horses, &c.; and at all the upstairs windows a crowd of domestics, eager to obtain a glimpse of the All Highest.

Life in Salesche—the village of the *gut*—went on in a sort of outward tranquillity, varied by periods of unrest, for some time longer. There was plenty of patrolling to be done, and thus plenty of opportunity for getting away into remote spots on horseback and alone, which to some is one of the chiefest joys of life. The peasants were full of interest, as are all peasants. They were mostly Poles, but speaking German as well as their own language. They appeared perfectly content to be under German rule, provided they were left in peace to attend to their husbandry. By the middle of June they had got all their hay in. Then there came a day on which I saw the village crier going round with his bell to proclaim something to the people. They told me he was announcing that the day had come when the harvesting of the rape crop might begin. Is not this, after all, just about the only right and proper sort of proclamation to make to peasants?

The weather now got very hot, working up at long intervals into terrific thunderstorms, with blinding flashes of lightning and deafening peals; but in spite of all this to-do only a few drops of warmish rain would at the end of it be wrung from the reluctant sky. These storms must be of frequent occurrence every summer, for the little children took no notice of them at all. Before they burst, great flocks of starlings used to sweep about the sky and across the fields, and it was most interesting to watch their movements. At first sight they gave one the impression of some sort of rapidly expanding and contracting ball of vapour. Obeying to the instant a single impulse, they would wheel, tower, flatten out, swerve, land—all together. They would appear and disappear while in the air, according to whether their wings were at right angles or end-on to the spectator. Sometimes they looked like a great plume of smoke, drifting with the breeze, or the puff of a shrapnel burst. Then the entire flock would go into a spin, and in gyrations and convolutions bands of light and shade would pass upwards through its axis.

On Sunday mornings our detachment would parade for divine service in the village chapel. Mass was at eleven, and the chapel crowded to suffocation with Polish peasants—the men on one side, the women on the other, and all up the aisle, and, filling the space before the altar, swarms of children. There was little that was noteworthy about the building, whose rough stone walls were over-decorated with tawdry images and pictures; but the people's faith was real and touching. The congregational singing was beautiful, the children's voices rising pure and sweet, in great waves of melody. All Polish hymns have an uplift and a haunting sort

of triumphant sadness in them. Their hymns reflect their temperament: they are a people who would be sad to have less cause for sadness. . . .

Then there came a day when we got our orders to face about and march off to the east instead of to the west. Having seen the German insurgents safely off the premises (with their own co-operation), we were to do the same thing for Korfanty's Poles.

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We marched away to the east for four days, hard on the heels of the retiring Polish forces, each company marching on its own account, and billeting at night in villages and *guts*. As we crossed a commanding ridge we saw, far away to the south, the smudge across the sky which betokened the location of the industrial area, the division of which, as these lines are written, has occasioned so much heart-burning. We were glad that the direction of our march was taking us well to the north of it. We also got our first sight of Poland, across a great tract of forest. Through many quaint little country towns we marched, one of them being Tost, the legendary habitation of the goose that laid the golden egg. Movement through the forests was slow. Our march came to an end within watching distance of the Polish frontier. Detachment life continued for some time longer, and in much the same manner as before. In the writer's last detached station, Georgenberg (whose arms bear the same device as that which we used to see upon our golden coinage), there was an ancient church, built entirely of rough-hewn tarred wood, bearing the date 1666—an ominous date, to our minds, for wooden churches! The forests round Georgenberg were full of bilberries, which the women and children used systematically to gather all day long, and a few herds of deer and roebuck, which had managed to survive the predatory bands let loose when the *putsch* began, roamed about the once carefully preserved coverts. The raiding by both sides, which had been such a feature of our stay in the western portion of the country, was confined, in the eastern portion, to the occasional looting by Polish *badmashes* of horses and cattle from German foresters' lodges and the like. There was also an annoying amount of obliterating and disfiguring of signposts and notice-boards. In one little frontier village on the Brinitza an official Prussian eagle was converted into a Polish one on six successive nights by the simple application of a coat of whitewash, and back again to German by means of tar.

After a while our scattered detachments were withdrawn and concentrated. Once again the companies met, and battalion life was resumed. German

barracks in the ancient town of Tarnowitz became our portion.

Tarnowitz is affectionately termed by its inhabitants "*die alte freie Bergstadt.*" It has narrowly missed becoming an industrial town, though disfigured to some extent by being a biggish railway junction. Its picturesque cobbled *ring* is bordered on one side by very old houses and arcades, and under the shadow of its church tower there nestles an inn, built in 1598, in which Augustus the Strong, of Saxony and Poland, once sojourned with one of his fair frail ladies. Goethe, too, stopped in a Tarnowitz inn on the 24th September 1790, having journeyed laboriously from Weimar to inspect a steam-engine which was being experimented with in the mines of Königshütte. On the walls are inscribed the famous lines which he wrote that day, beginning—

"Fern von gebildeten Menschen, am Ende des Reiches."

Tarnowitz is not even in the *Reich* now! . . .

A FISHING TRIP IN THE EMERALD ISLE.

BY A. W. LONG.

V.

WE found life at Rackrent Hall very pleasant, but, at the same time, very different to the life we led in England—a life without any rough edges or harsh words, and, best of all, with plenty of elbow-room. Gradually we sank into the background of endless servants and took of its colour. Although the servants never appeared to really get down to any hard work, yet if you asked them to do any mortal thing on earth, even if they never did it, they would acquiesce with a pleasant and willing, "Indeed and I will, yer honour," or, "Sure, it's a pleasure to do that same for ye, miss": very different to the surly growl of an English servant when you ask him to do something outside his sphere of work.

But, on the other hand, our Irish servants had not the remotest idea of time. Most of them could not even read the face of the clock, and the invaluable Patsey was as oblivious as the casual Porgeen. Further, if an Irish peasant cares for you, he will give you any answer sooner than none.

Patsey and Robert were the biggest optimists I have ever met. Patsey when he called you, if asked was it a fine day, would reply with a laugh, "It is that, sorr, it's a grand day"; and when he drew the curtains you would see the rain coming down like water out of a worn-out sieve. And to your remark that it appeared to be raining, "Ah, that's only a morning mist; sure the sun'll be shining in the canopy of heaven by the time ye have yer breakfast taken."

Even on a heavy windless day, with the river far below fishing height, Robert would encourage one with a, "Sure, there's always a fool in the river, and yer honour will surely meet that same one." When you stuck in a fish, he would make you think that it was all through your own cleverness, and if you lost it through your own stupidity, he always had a plausible excuse.

Even Charles, downright Sassenach of the Sassenachs, grew more genial and readier to make allowances for the weaknesses of others; but though Mary strove laboriously and earnestly to adapt herself to her surroundings, she remained as obviously an Englishwoman as she would have appeared in Paris.

Before long Mary began to seek some amusement for the servants, though as far as I could see they always appeared thoroughly amused with each other, and probably with us, judging from the screams of delight (chiefly female, certainly) one heard at any time of day or night in the kitchen and servants' hall.

So it was settled that a dance should be given, the details to be arranged by Mary with Patsey's help, which meant that Patsey would command and we obey.

The great hay-barn was swept and garnished; Patsey made a journey to the little town of Eastport, engaged two fiddlers for the dance, and returned long after dinner-time with a cart-load of porter and provisions, singing at the top of his voice the "Wearing of the Green." Mary said each servant might bring a guest.

For days before the dance none of the servants did a stroke of work, while we seemed to spend most of our time in the dining-room, the table pushed into a corner, practising the steps of some weird dance called a "square set," with which Patsey insisted that we must open the ball. Patsey was to partner Mary, Charles the cook, and I was to lead out Robert's wife; for music we had Maria with a full-toned "to-and-fro."

The night of the dance came, and with it a crowd which filled the hay-barn to overflowing: they must have run a fine comb over that wild countryside to collect so many people, young and middle-aged.

Patsey, resplendent in a boiled shirt, a violent green tie, and what looked suspiciously like a pair of my best pumps, quickly cleared a space in the middle of the barn. Gripping Mary by the waist with a great red paw, he started off full split on the intricate steps of that awful square set, followed meekly by Charles and the cook in a black satin dress, and by Mrs Robert and myself.

The two Eastport fiddlers, well primed by Patsey, and Maria armed with a huge new extra powerful "to-and-fro," soon got into their stride and set a tremendous pace.

At one part of the performance we had to waltz our partners round as fast as they could go, and Patsey would give the signal for this with a terrific yell, louder each time, and greeted always with shouts of applause from the delighted audience. Charles found the pace too hot for his liking, but the cook saw to it that he never flagged for an instant; and when at last the band stopped from sheer exhaustion or possibly want of drink, we were only able to stagger blindly to some chairs along the wall, which some of the onlookers kindly vacated for us. Once Charles had recovered his wind he disappeared, to be seen no more that evening.

Directly the band had recuperated, Porgeen appeared, and

I could see at once that he was what Patsey would describe as "nicely"; the band struck up "Pop goes the Weasel," and the old villain started to caper slowly about in the middle of the barn with steps like a cat on hot bricks.

I don't believe that he knew a single dance step, nor had he the slightest idea of time; but he gave a comic show which would have earned him in a month at any London music-hall enough money to keep him in ease and poteen for the rest of his days.

He was always out of time, and would give the band a withering look every few seconds, to explain to us that it was the musicians' fault and not his.

The audience—every chair held a boy with a girl sitting on his knee, which appeared to be the accepted custom (a pity Charles did not wait to entertain the cook in this fashion)—cheered the old man to the echo, and he carried on until he came to a complete standstill, when Patsey seized and removed him, to be revived with poteen for a further performance.

Jigs, waltzes, polkas, and sets followed in quick succession, the only pauses being to hearten up the hardy fiddlers; then, in response to loud cries for a song, Porgeen appeared once more, and sang his only song, "The Kerry Recruit."

By now he was solemn tight, and if possible funnier than before. He took quite a minute to remember each line, in spite of Patsey's hoarse promptings, and when not singing took funny little mincing steps across the floor, pretending to be dancing with a napkin, which he carried twisted across his right arm, and holding one end with his left hand as though clasping his partner.

Gradually Porgeen grew quieter and quieter, and his capers became slower and slower, until at last he could hardly raise a foot from the floor. And just as we expected to see him collapse, Patsey and Maria rushed at him, gripped him by the head and feet, and amidst the delighted shouts of the rest carried him off to bed. And Mary and I seized the opportunity to slip away unobserved, leaving the company to enjoy themselves unrestrained by our presence. Patsey told us next morning that they carried on until nearly breakfast-time, when the two fiddlers tucked their fiddles under their arms and set out to walk back to Eastport, a matter of sixteen Irish miles, and that he had to hunt the guests out of the place with a stick.

Our Ford turned up the day after the dance, and looking none the better for the journey. The driver's excuse for the delay was that he had been afraid to drive a new car fast. Robert said afterwards that the man told him he had spent several days fishing on the way, and had good sport too. Mary wanted to keep the

man on as chauffeur, but Charles declared that if another servant was brought into the place, he would leave the next day for England, and would wash his hands of us; and, moreover, that the brute would probably spend the greater part of his time poaching.

Spring fishing being temporarily at a standstill owing to fine weather, we determined to take a drive through the country to the south, and see a hotel on the coast of which Mary had read great accounts in the Irish papers.

When about four miles from the coast the road ran along the shores of a lake in a valley, with high mountains rising up at each side, and at a sudden turn we came upon a magnificent castle of whitish stone built into the side of the mountain. Above, and on both sides of it, great woods ran right up the face of the mountain, until they met the bare rock near the top. In front lay a lake surrounded by grounds full of fine shrubs, and all along the road fuchsia hedges.

After leaving this valley we ran through open rocky country towards a mountain standing alone; and on a promontory to the north of this we found the hotel, a quaint old house standing almost on the very shore, with its sides slated to keep out the spray of the Atlantic gales in wintertime.

Some former owner had apparently made a half-hearted effort to grow trees, but about fifteen feet seemed to be the limit they had been able to struggle up to, and on this fine spring day the rooks were busy building in them. The drive passed along this stunted rookery on higher ground, and we could look right down into the nests from the car.

The view from the house was wonderful. Looking across a bay of deepest blue, one could see range after range of mountains: the nearest vivid green and golden brown in the sunshine, and the distant deep purple, like the bloom on a grape. And while we watched, the lights and shades were ever changing as the clouds passed inland on the soft west wind.

We had tea served by a quaint old butler with a face like a harvest moon set in a fringe of fiery orange whiskers, called Martin, and then prepared to start for home; but "Lizzie" had other notions, and refused even to think of starting. Charles got in and under, but, as the old butler described it, "Divil a puff could he knock out o' her." Luckily we had brought some kit in case of accidents, as in the end we had to stay the night.

It was the queerest hotel I had ever seen. The bedrooms seemed to be everywhere and anywhere, up and down stairs, through each other, and even leading out of the sitting-rooms. The place gave one

the idea that the owners had numbered all the rooms, put the numbers in a hat, and then drawn lots whether a room should be a sitting-room, a bedroom, or pantry.

We had roast chickens for dinner, extraordinary tough birds. Charles could not face them, and shuddered when they came to table. Afterwards he told me that his bedroom looked out into the kitchen-yard, and that when washing his hands after battling with Lizzie, he had been an unwilling witness to the last chapter in the chickens' lives. He had been watching them peacefully feeding when the kitchen door suddenly burst open, and out rushed a wild-looking, bare-footed, young woman, with her hair flying behind her, and brandishing a huge carving-knife in one hand. She had hunted the chickens round and round the yard, and finally cornered them, to finish the horrid job in a bath, where she also plucked them and removed their superfluous parts. He had told Martin that he would not require a bath in the morning, and advised me to do likewise.

Charles and I were smoking before going to bed, when Martin opened the door and peered into every corner of the room. Charles asked him if he was looking for anything, and received the extraordinary reply: "In troth I am, yer honour; sure Bridget's just after telling me the auld grey cow's missing this day and a night." "But," laughed Charles, "you don't expect to find her in the smoking-room, do you?" "Maybe and maybe not; sure there's no telling where that auld divil of a strap would ramble into," replied Martin, and he departed to carry on the hunt.

Presently we retired for the night, and when I was half undressed there came a knock at my door, which opened to admit the face and whiskers of Martin. "She's found," said he with a grin. "Where?" said I. "And where do ye think?" said he. "In the cow-house," I ventured, to be met with an indignant snort. "Not at all, but in the best bedroom beyond the billiard-room; and what's more, that same auld divil's after eating a blanket and the best half of one of the missus's fashionable countey-panes, bad cess to her, and good night to yer honour."

The chickens, or rather the remnants, appeared cold for breakfast, and at the sight of them Charles declared that if Lizzie was still not for it, he for one would walk home; but to our joy Lizzie started off first twist, as though she had never sulked in her life.

By now the spring fishing was practically over, and we hoped that the next flood would bring the grilse up the Glenowen river, but were disappointed. The flood came all right, but the watchers reported that they had not

seen a single grilse running. However, Robert was never defeated, and armed with a tin of worms and a ten-foot trout-rod, he and I set off to fish a mountain stream the morning after the flood.

We had a hard and wet walk round the spur of the mountain before we came to the stream, which ran down a ravine into the valley to join the Glenowen river, and, like all these mountain streams, only fished well after a flood. Robert produced some enormous hooks on gut fit to kill a spring fish on, and smiled a polite incredulity when I insisted on using the finest Stewart tackle and lightest gut.

Starting in the valley we fished steadily upwards, catching many beautiful small golden brown trout, about three to the pound. Robert had never seen Stewart tackle worked before, and when I gave him the rod he made a poor fist of it at first, being used to allowing the trout to swallow his big hooks before striking. But when I showed him how to cast the worm up-stream, and to give a quick but gentle strike with the wrist directly an obstruction was met with, he was delighted with this, to him, novel method of worming, and in a very short time was as expert as any angler to be met with in Berwickshire, so quick-witted is the Irish peasant. When the stream grew too small to fish we sat down under a big rock to eat our lunch and take in the view.

After a time the conversation turned on eels, and Robert told me how at one time eel-fishers used to come every year from Athlone to fish all the lakes and rivers in the district. And he went on to describe them as terrible cross fellows but tremendous cute; and how they used to send all the eels they caught straight to Holland, where they were at once shipped back to the London market. It seemed a long way round from the West of Ireland to Billingsgate Market, but when Robert explained that Dutch eels fetched twice the price of Irish eels, then the tremendous cuteness of the cross eel-fishers was pretty obvious.

On our way home we met Charles and Jack O'Mara driving two weary asses laden with creels piled up with mussels. Charles had been very mysterious at breakfast-time about what he was going to do that day, and had disappeared with Jack directly the meal was over. It seems that Jack had told him some yarn about a "foreigner" (the mountain peasant's way of describing a fellow-countryman from a different part of the country to his own) who visited the district one very dry summer and had made a fortune, computed by Jack at £4, out of the pearls he had abstracted from mussels, which Jack said thronged every lake and river.

Charles must have thought by now that our fortune looked like going west in a short time,

and that one to take its place would doubtless prove an agreeable surprise to Mary and me, and accordingly had toiled up with Jack and the asses to a mountain lake, where the old fool assured him the mussels grew on top of one another.

We all walked back to the house together, and so keen was Charles to see his pearls that he and Patsey at once set to work with oyster-knives to open the great pile of mussels which Jack had dumped in the stable-yard.

After tea I went out to see how the pearl-hunt was progressing, and found them still hard at it, but no signs of a pearl as yet. Robert, who was rather afraid of Charles, now volunteered the information that "them mussels was no good," but Charles took no notice. After opening several more hundred mussels Charles asked why they were no good, and Robert then explained that only those which grow in running water contain pearls, and that if Master Charles would go with him to-morrow he would show him where to get the right ones. Charles laid down his knife and walked into the house without a word.

Soon after this we had a small flood, and the river watchers reported that no grilse had come up, but that they had seen late spring fish making their way up the ladder at the mouth of the Duffmore river.

Jack was sick at the time, so Charles fished alone and Robert accompanied me, and on this occasion we took different banks. Robert and I delayed at the falls, watching a seal which was apparently of the opinion that there were still some spring fish to go up, while Charles went on ahead, and we did not overtake him until we came to the pool where he had stuck in Mrs Hughes's old cow. Here we found him playing a good fish, and he pointed with pride to another lying on the bank, which he had killed about half an hour before.

We went on to the pool above, fished it without result, and were on the point of going on higher when we heard piteous calls for help from Charles. Rushing back, we found him in a predicament, trying to play his fish, which had taken a mad fit, and at the same time hunt away an old long-eared sow which was making determined efforts to eat his fish on the bank.

Charles would make a fierce rush at the sow with the handle of his gaff, and at once his fish would charge down the river, and he would have to follow. Then the fish would quiet down, and out of the tail of his eye he would see the sow starting in on his precious fish in the hand. At once Charles would forget all about the fish in the river and charge for the sow, and at intervals he would spare a fraction of a second to curse us for not coming to his assistance; but Robert said he could not swim,

while I was enjoying the show too much, and explained that I was afraid of catching a chill.

At last Charles got really vexed when he saw that the sow had already demolished the head of the fish, and made an attack this time with the business end of the gaff. Probably his idea was to drag the fish away, but unfortunately the gaff went home in the sow's snout.

As though encouraged by the piercing squeals of the sow, the spring fish redoubled its efforts to regain its freedom, while the sow strove with might and main to drag gaff and Charles to Mrs Hughes's pig-sty. And there stood Charles between the devil and the deep blue sea: if he let go of his gaff he would never be able to land his fish, and if he went with the sow he was sure to lose it. All the time his line was fast running out, and the sow, sticking her feet into the ground and getting her back well into it, was heaving like a twenty-stone policeman at the end of a tug-of-war rope. It only wanted Mrs Hughes and her long tongue to appear to complete the picture, but by bad luck, according to Robert, she had gone to market: at any rate she never appeared, doubtless to Charles's great relief.

Charles is slow at making up his mind, but the sow soon settled the question for him by vanishing in the direction of her home with Charles's gaff still buried in her snout.

Thankful for having his mind made up for him, Charles was now able to turn his undivided attention to his fish in the river. Robert threw my gaff across to him, and in a few minutes he landed his second fish in triumph. But nothing would ever induce Charles to fish that pool again as long as we were at Rackrent Hall; and sooner than face Mrs Hughes's long tongue—Robert refused point-blank to go "within the roar of an ass of the auld divil"—he wrote that night to England for a new gaff.

VI.

For some days we had been thinking of motoring to Eastport, to see Mr Paddy Mulligan about sundry repairs to the house, which were fast becoming urgent. Charles had written to him several times on the subject; and though he replied to the letters he always forgot to mention the repairs, confining his remarks to the price of cattle and sheep, and giving a full description of the sport he had enjoyed recently on the Eastport river with the rod.

A good steady drip one pouring wet night on Dash's bed in Mary's room brought matters to a head; and it was decided, in spite of Charles's protest of greasy roads, to

start after breakfast, in order to make a direct assault on Mr Mulligan. Our road ran north, first along the side of the bay, then inland, following the course of the Duffmore river; then through a narrow mountain pass to the open country round the little seaport of Eastport.

We left home in a heavy mist of rain; but before we had gone three miles the wind suddenly veered, the clouds began to lift off the mountains, and in the turn of your hand the sun came out, first shining through the fast-thinning clouds, and then lighting up the whole landscape—a complete change between the two extremes of a gloomy wet day and a brilliantly fine one in the space of not more than half an hour.

But when within a few miles from Eastport the wind backed, and we drove down the long steep hill in a steady drizzle of fine rain. One's first impression was of suddenly having come upon the dirtiest and most depressing town in the world—a startling contrast to the magnificent scenery we had just passed through, and a change from the handiwork of God to that of man with a vengeance.

The town of Eastport consists of one long main street, with numerous narrow side streets running out of it, and out of these various squalid *culs-de-sac*, so narrow that it is said to be possible to shake hands across them from the upstairs windows. And over all towers the great steepleless Roman Catholic chapel, shaped like a gigantic oblong box of limestone, glistening black in the damp atmosphere, making the wretched houses look even smaller than they are, and by its magnificence accentuating their appearance of poverty.

It was market-day, and the dirty main street was packed with country people, some standing about in groups gossiping, while others who had just arrived were unharnessing their horses and asses outside the shops they dealt with, leaving their carts anyhow and anywhere in the street. And at the corner of every side-street lounged a group of corner-boys, hands in pockets, and amusing themselves by criticising every new arrival.

On the edge of the footpath were many stalls, some selling a kind of seaweed, which Patsey told us afterwards the country people chew, deriving great comfort and virtue from it, others offering tin cans and pails; while at each end of the street men were auctioning second-hand clothes and shoddy harness. And as though the street was not sufficiently congested already, the country people bringing carts of turf for sale must needs take up their positions outside and in between the stalls. Several times Charles had to stop, and with difficulty we reached the hotel yard, where we left the car.

Before interviewing Mulligan,

Charles insisted on going to see a boat-builder who lived on the river-side, from whom he wished to buy a boat to put on a lake which Robert told us used to be famous for brown trout, and had not been fished for some years. We found that he had a good-looking boat the right size, and arranged to send a cart for it the following day.

After leaving the boat-builder's shed we waited by the river to watch a salmon-net being hauled in. Half the town must have been leaning over the walls along the river banks, and the contrast between these cheery laughing people and their dismal town was very marked.

We then made our way to Mr Mulligan's shop. The undertaker proved as original as his etters, and so talkative that neither Charles nor I were able to get in more than a few words at a time edgeways. Charles got as far as "my sister's dog kept awake," when Mulligan started to try and sell him a brace of red setters; and when he paused for breath or whisky I made an effort, got as far as "there is a leak," only to be seized by the arm and dragged off to a horrible vault filled with whisky and porter casks, and asked with a loud laugh, "Which cask will I be after leaking for ye?" In the end Mr Mulligan promised to have everything put right on the very next day, "maybe sooner"; and seeing that the man was too much for us, we retreated before he might blarney us into buying his dogs or whisky.

On leaving the shop we saw a weird-looking old man capering in the middle of the street, and violently ringing a large hand-bell above his head. Suddenly he stopped, and in a loud raucous voice shouted out: "To-night, to-night, Grand Social Concert to-night in the town-hall, Eastport. Grand bootlaces, long, strong, and durable—two a penny." A pause while he capered and finally rocked on his heels, and with a wild laugh: "Sure, they must be rotten at the price!" And away he went down the street, waving the bell over his head and howling with laughter.

To stand in the street of an Irish provincial town is always fatal; and besides, our interest in the bellringer's performance must have proclaimed us strangers, with the result that when we started to move on we found ourselves hemmed in by beggars—old, young, female and male, and all dirty. One old woman, carrying a basket of highly-scented "real Dublin Bay herrings," faced Charles demanding money whichever way he turned. Charles would undoubtedly have got the better of the ancient fishwoman, but the smell of her fish was too much for him, and hastily taking what he thought was a sixpence out of his pocket, he threw it into her basket, and turned to make good his escape.

Hardly had we got clear when we heard a shout behind us, and turning saw the dreadful old fishwoman making straight for us at a fast trot; and when she got near, Charles saw to his horror that she was holding up a half-sovereign in her fingers, and realised the mistake he had made in his panic.

Of course we should have fled at once, but Charles seemed rooted to the ground, fascinated by the sight of his lost half-sovereign. Before we could move she was upon us, followed by the rest, and down on her knees in the street with prayers for Charles's "sowl." Then she struggled to her feet, still calling down the blessings of heaven on Charles, and made frantic efforts to embrace him.

Probably the smell of the herrings caused Charles to lose his head, for without a pause he threw a half-crown into the woman's basket, and begged her to be quiet and go home; but of course this only increased the fervour and intensity of her prayers. "God Almighty Himself above in the canopy of heaven never made a finer gintleman, so He didn't."

By this time we must have been surrounded ten deep by all the beggars in the town. Like wildfire a report had run through the place that a mad Englishman was after landing on the mail train. That he was either mad, drunk, or both, or had robbed a bank, and that he was scattering half-sovereigns as easily as a drunken pig-buyer from Limerick would scatter halfpennies after a pig-fair.

Luckily at this point two huge R.I.C. constables appeared on the scene, the beggars melted away like snow, and Charles dashed for the hotel-yard, started up Lizzie, and sat in her with the engine running until we were ready to go home. And as soon as I had collected Mary and her numerous purchases, Charles drove Lizzie through Eastport like an armoured car, swearing that he would never bring us there again. Even Mary was amused at the loss of Charles's half-sovereign, not to mention his half-crown, and proceeded to get some of her own back over the farthing episode in Dublin.

A few days after the arrival of Charles's boat he and I drove out to the brown trout lake, Lough Alone, taking Jack with us to help Charles to row. We drove due east through the mountains for several miles until we came to the verge of civilisation, and there in a hollow of the hills lay the lake, a sheet of dazzling blue in the spring sunshine. At first glance the valley appeared to be uninhabited, but gradually one's eye caught the thatched roofs of cottages hidden away in tiny valleys within the valley, and sometimes showing a peep of whitewashed gable-ends. Of fields in the regular sense there were none; but here and there patches of a few square yards of cultivated land, mere pockets

in the great waste of heather and boulders, and fenced round with the stones which the owners had laboriously cleared off the land—one of the many districts in the West of Ireland where the men, after putting in their small crops in the spring-time, go off to England as harvesters, starting with the hay crop in Lancashire and finishing with potato-digging in the Fen Country, returning home in the late autumn or early winter with a few hard-earned pounds. It is not uncommon in a poor district of this kind to find two neighbours, one of whom speaks with a broad Lancashire accent, and the other you would take for a native of Lincolnshire.

The road ran past the lake, and we left Lizzie at a cottage on the roadside, where lived the man in whose charge Charles had left the boat. In reality we found that the lake was divided into two by a narrow neck of rocky land, joined together by a canal about twenty yards long, so that fish had easy access from one part to the other; but in spite of this the trout were totally different. In one part, which had a boggy bottom, the trout were very dark-coloured and played badly; but in the other, which had a whitish marl bottom, the trout were as silvery as sea trout and played like tigers.

At first we had only a light but hard north wind, not enough for fly-fishing, so we amused ourselves by rowing about, looking for likely fishing shallows. On the south-west shore were groups of big rocks, and on them as many cuckoos as the ordinary countryman will hear, let alone see, in a season. And they took no manner of heed of the boat, though we stopped within a few yards of them, so intent were they with the business in hand, which consisted in cuckooing frantically to each other from the different rocks, and making a stately bow with each cuckoo. At last one bird flew away, quickly followed by a second, and gradually all disappeared in pairs. And though they did not return to the rocks throughout the day, we could hear them calling to each other from the higher ground on every side of the lake.

Rounding a patch of high reeds, we came suddenly on top of a small flock of mallard, their brilliant colouring showing up vividly in the bright light—a sure sign that their mates were sitting on their nests not far away, probably in the heather a few yards from the lake.

Whinchats were common, chatting at each other continuously from the tops of every patch of blazing yellow gorse; while from a small fir wood came the cooing of wood-pigeons, one of the most peaceful sounds in the world. And in the low bog-myrtle growing at the very water's edge tiny little brown wrens flitted from bush to bush, never still or easy for more than a few seconds at a time.

As ever, nature left alone was perfect, but as so often happens, the scene was spoilt by the hand of man. On the shore of a small bay, where the ground was high and level, we came across a hideous concrete wall about twenty feet square—just a plain ugly wall sticking out of the ground for no apparent reason whatever; but Jack told us that it was a ball alley, where all the lads of the country-side collected on Sundays and holy days to play hand-ball, a kind of primitive fives.

As it was still no good trying to fish, Charles determined to see how his boat pulled, and telling Jack to pull his best, we started off down the lake at a great pace. Jack said nothing, but I could hear him grinding his teeth, and every time he drove his oar into the water he would let out a mighty grunt. Charles fancied himself greatly with an oar, and before we had gone far Jack, who nearly wrenched the rowlock out of the gunwale every stroke, began to pull Charles round in a circle. Charles then called a halt, whereupon Jack burst into wild peals of laughter, which greatly vexed Charles. After a careful examination of the boat, Charles insisted that she was built crooked, so it was decided that they should change places, and away we went again. This time Jack could only hold his own, though the grunts grew into roars, and gradually Charles began to get the better of him.

By now the wind had backed to the westward, the day grown softer, and noting a rise of fly on the water, I insisted on starting to fish.

We found that the natural fly resembled a "Wickham's Fancy," and with this pattern had good sport until a late hour. As we were landing, small flocks of whimbrel started flighting in and settling on the shores of the lake, probably to rest on their long journey to the breeding-grounds in the north. Young curlew, Jack called them.

Before going home we had tea in the cottage. When Charles had started up Lizzie, Jack was missing. After some time we ran him to ground in a stable, sitting on an upturned turf creel, with a mug of poteen in one hand and a hunk of soda bread in the other; and I knew from the silly grin on his face that he was what Patsey would call nicely, thank you.

Charles ordered him sharply to get up out of that, and to get into the car, but Jack would only chuckle and shake his head. Eventually, with the aid of the farmer and his son, we got the old villain out and into the car, but had to hoist him in like a sack of potatoes.

We got home only half an hour late for dinner. Jack was at once handed over to Patsey to be dealt with after his own original fashion, to appear the following morning his humble and simple self once again.

Directly dinner was over Charles insisted that we should start off at once to the wake of a cousin of Patsey's, who had lived "above on the side of the mountain," wherever that might mean in this country of mountains. I had had quite enough for one day, and was for an early bed; but Charles said that Patsey had begged him as a great favour that we should at least put in an appearance, that it would be a stupid mistake to offend the people, and that we need only be there for a few minutes.

In the end I weakly gave in, and we started off on an outside car with Patsey, a wild stable-boy driving perched up on the dickey seat. An outside car is without doubt the finest two-wheeled trap in the world: it will carry twice the load an English dogcart will, and, moreover, more than two passengers do not make any difference to the balance. But to the mere Englishman it presents one great difficulty —that of retaining his seat on a bad road, or, in fact, at any time when in motion. To an Irishman it comes as second nature, drunk or sober, to sit on one in any position with apparent effortless ease, simply clinging by his big toes to the outer edge of the wing on which his feet rest.

The night was as dark as the famous cupboard into which Pigg thrust his long nose when Jorrocks asked him what of the night, the going so bad that the car only seemed to touch the road in spots; and the boy drove like a Dublin jarvey returning from Punchestown races.

Our host and hostess received us at the door of their cottage with stately courtesy, and bade us ten thousand welcomes, while we murmured our condolences. Patsey bustling in ahead, acted the part of our *avant-courier*. At first I was blinded by the sudden change from inky darkness to dazzling light, but gradually was able to take in the weird scene, to be interrupted by the important Patsey, who conducted us to the corpse, laid out on a bed in a recess in a corner of the kitchen by the big open fireplace. At first I thought that we were to be formally introduced to the departed, but found that we were only expected to take a pinch of snuff from a saucer poised on the dead man's chest. This ceremony over, we were conducted to seats of honour in front of the roaring fire, and our host proceeded to present us with new clay pipes and savage-looking black-cake tobacco, while Patsey offered us our choice of porter or poteen.

The kitchen was quite a good size, the far end from the fireplace being used as a general stable, in which were two little black cows and several calves about the size of flat-coated retrievers, who showed a mild and benevolent interest in the unusual throng of strangers. A shaggy pony unconcernedly

ate his hay from a rack; above on rough perches rows and rows of fluffed-out and sleepy-looking cocks and hens of every breed under the sun blinked at us with unseeing eyes; and I was dying to peep under the bed to see if there was a pig there or not.

The room was full of people of all ages, and through the gathering fog of turf and tobacco smoke I thought that I caught glimpses of most of our servants' faces, to disappear behind some old woman's back the instant their eye caught mine. There was no mistaking Porgeen's long nib or Maria's flaming head of hair, generally standing on end like shock-headed Peter's from a superabundance of static electricity, as Charles used to say; but the others were so mixed up and through each other that it was impossible to be sure.

For some time after our entry the company was very quiet and subdued, but gradually, under the influence of porter and poteen, they forgot our presence, and started to discuss the virtues of the departed, the prospect of the crops, and the price of pigs. Patsey pointed out to us a row of very old women—they might have sat for a picture of witches—sitting on a form by themselves in close proximity to the live stock, and told us they were the keeners, and that he would soon get them into song for us. The usual stone jar of poteen was produced, each old lady given a double ration in a teacup by Patsey, and then they set up the pipes: quite the most fearsome noise I ever heard—moans, groans, and shrill lamentations. All the while they rocked themselves in unison on the form, beating their hands together, and at intervals threw their aprons over their heads. It nearly drove Charles mad, and he insisted on Patsey stopping them at once at any cost.

For a time the people were silent, the old ones getting down to the drink and tobacco, while the young ones whispered and giggled amongst themselves in the background. Then arose cries of "Maria, Maria, a tune, give us a tune," and the coy-looking Maria, her hair looking redder and wilder than ever, was duly pushed into the foreground by her companions, and the large "to-and-fro" thrust into her hands.

At first only one couple, bolder than the rest, took the floor; but when the others saw that nothing awful happened to the pair, they started to dance, and in a short time the centre of the room was packed. Each couple only had a small space to twist and turn on, and the booming of Maria's "to-and-fro" put an end to the conversation of the elders. The dance over, the young ones resumed their giggles and whispering, and their elders had an innings with their general chat.

At this point a middle-aged gentleman sitting near us began

to moan and complain that he felt badly. On Patsy asking him what was on him at all, he informed us that he had taken a big dose of salts, and how it was after swelling up on him.

Patsey loudly demanded poteen and ginger, but the ginger was not forthcoming, and the old woman of the house sarcastically suggested that the man had enough drink taken, and, in troth, that was what was on him, the crayture. As usual, nothing was done except to argue and chatter, though it is true that Patsey ran his hands over the man and cheered him up by saying that it was bigger he was after getting every minute, and that maybe he would burst yet. And he did get visibly bigger as time went on, but nothing was done for him, and the volume of his groans increased in proportion to the size of the man.

At last some one suggested the doctor, but this advice was promptly scouted. "Sure, don't ye know well that that same doctor has only half a lung, and doesn't be out be nights unless by the same token he can see the colour of yer gold."

The people, one and all, appeared quite indifferent to the unfortunate man's fate, while Charles and I sat by helpless, and fascinated by the now fearful size of the man's body. At last Charles told Patsey that he really must do something, but couldn't tell him what, and that it would be too awful if he exploded.

I never saw Patsey beat for an idea, and, sure enough, he came up to the scratch as usual. Suddenly he yelled for a rope, any kind of a rope, and when they produced a cart rope he proceeded with willing assistants to coil it round and round the man's body, in spite of his yells and protestations. "Sure, man, dear," said Patsey, "isn't it better to hurt ye than to let ye burst?" but the man seemed to think otherwise. They then proceeded to carry him into the inner bedroom, and to our relief we saw him no more.

Again Maria was in demand for a strenuous square set, in the middle of which there arose an agonising scream from an old woman of, "Oh my God, Michael's up and awake!" And, sure enough, the corpse seemed to be sitting up in bed and taking a lively interest in the square set, while the snuff saucer lay in flitters on the floor.

For a fraction of time there was a dead silence, to be broken by screams from the women and oaths from the men, as one and all joined in a headlong rush for the door, carrying Charles and me with them.

In a few minutes we heard our driver yelling for us, and once he had us upon the car he drove full split down the bohereen and the road home, where we arrived very much

ashamed of ourselves as dawn was breaking.

The next day Patsey gave us the explanation of the coming to life again of poor Michael. It appeared that Michael was a hunchback, a "crutcheen" Patsey called him, and in order to make him lie nice and flat in the bed a large heavy flat stone had been placed on his chest to press his hump well down into the mattress. Doubtless the strenuous square set had shaken the bed and so displaced the stone, with the startling result we had seen. But Charles and I had quite finished with wakes, and Charles was very displeased with Patsey.

Some time afterwards I happened to be in Eastport, and tackled the boat-builder with having stuck us with a crooked boat. He thought for a moment, and then asked, "Sure, doesn't yer honour be always having Jack O'Mara pulling an oar with ye?" I admitted that we generally had. "Well," said he in triumph, "sure, that's why I built her that ways. Ye can always be putting that great omadaun on the hard side and kape him quiet."

VII.

We saw very few visitors at Rackrent Hall, and one of our few regular ones was a Mayo pedlar commonly known as the Red Pedlar, though there was not a sign of red on him now with the exception of his nose; but in his youth it was rumoured he had been the proud possessor of the finest and fieriest pair of red whiskers in the West. And as Patsey put it, "Them same whiskers used to be worth a barrel of stout a month to him; so they used." "What for?" queried Charles. "Sure, weren't all the gentry in the county crazy to buy them to colour (tie) their flies with," answered Patsey. It seemed that in the Red Pedlar's youth one of the most popular salmon flies used to be one called the "Colleen," which had for a body the fiery red whiskers of a true bogtrotter, and for this purpose his whiskers were most suitable, being just the right shade and texture, and having a wonderful glint when held up to the light.

He drove an ass-cart, which was like the most wonderful bran-pie for producing the unexpected — rosaries, mirrors, buttons, apples, prayer-books, knives, amulets, needles, rolls of homespun, and even ladies' bonnets, of a type so old that at times they would succeed in catching up the local fashions, came out of the cart at the magic touch of the Red Pedlar. And it was even reported that at the very bottom of all lay bottles of Mayo poteen, the "real stuff."

The old man's appearance driving down the avenue was

the signal for every servant in the place to stop work; they would crowd round the cart and spend hours examining his odd collection of goods. Probably most of their small wages found their way into his old leather wallet. And generally he would spend the night with us—in fact no one ever went away without a meal or a night's lodging,—and would amuse the household telling fairy stories by the yard until any hour of the night.

On one of these occasions Jack was seen to buy an amulet after much deliberation and protracted bargaining. The wily old pedlar told him that this amulet was full of great virtue—I forget how many people had blessed it,—and that whoever wore it constantly would never be drowned, no matter how drunk he might be; but on no account must the owner ever take it off or the virtue would pass out of it for good. Jack's eyes and mouth opened to their full extent as the pedlar unfolded the virtues of the amulet, and never closed until it was his very own, when the maids insisted on securing it round his neck with shouts of amusement.

One of Jack's daily duties was to row across the bay to meet the mail-car and bring back the house post-bag. Except for the fact that his dinner divided his day into two, he would probably never have known the difference between morning and afternoon, and the signal for him to start used to be a loud and long tally-ho from the pantry window by Patsey, kept up until Jack was seen to be well on his way to the old boat in which he used to cross the bay. Sometimes the boat had been taken the previous night by country people and left on the far side; then Jack would return to the house in a towering rage and demand the motor-boat. He was invariably late for the mail-car, and the driver used to hide the bag under a bush by the roadside, where Jack was always delighted with his own cleverness at finding it.

A few mornings after Jack had bought the virtuous amulet from the old pedlar, Charles and I were sitting on a seat in front of the house watching two fishing-boats racing up the bay. We heard Patsey's usual tally-ho, and after a time Jack passed on his way to the slip where his boat was usually kept. From our position we could see that the boat was not there, and we waited, expecting him to return with his usual request to be taken across in the motor-boat at once or he would surely be late for the post.

We saw him reach the slip, and after gazing intently for some time at the place where his boat ought to have been, he started to return, then stopped and began fumbling at his neck with both hands. Finally he went back to the slip and began to walk into

the sea. Luckily the tide was out at the time and the water quite shallow for a good distance. Always a slow mover, the water made him slower than ever, and his progress could not have exceeded a couple of yards a minute.

As soon as we realised that Jack was going to try and walk across the bay, trusting no doubt to the virtue of the Red Pedlar's amulet, we rushed down to the slip, and by the time we got there Jack was up to his neck, but now hardly moving. Charles called to him to come out of that at once, but he took no notice. Not being keen on a wetting, we waited, but after a pause and much arguing he started to go on. I then told him that if he came out at once I would take him across in the motor-boat and give him a big drink of whisky. This made him hesitate, and I thought we had won; but he started again after shouting back that the amulet would surely see him across.

We were on the point of wading in after the old fool, when we heard the roars of the approaching Patsey and waited. At Patsey's bitter words of command Jack slowly dragged himself out of the sea, red in the face with fury, and ever afterwards he insisted that if we had only had the sense to let him alone he would have crossed the bay and brought back post and boat.

Owing to the continuous fine weather and the consequent non-arrival of the grilse, we told Robert that he must produce some sport, and, as ever, he did—in the form of wild-goat stalking. According to Robert, on some of the higher mountains there were large flocks of goats which had not been molested for years, and which had horns as big as elephants' tusks. A high mountain on the opposite side of the bay was selected for the stalk. Mary, who had been listening, elected to go with us and to take Dash, and asked Robert if it was a hard mountain to climb. "Is it that one, miss; sure ye would be eating grass the whole way up to the top." This was, of course, double Dutch to Mary, who always thought Robert quite mad; and when it was explained to her that the mountain was so steep that she would have to climb with her teeth as well as her hands and toes, she gave up all idea of going.

Charles, who had stalked in Scotland, took charge of the arrangements.

On a fine morning after a very early breakfast Jack put us across the bay in his old boat, where we were met by a local guide and two lads with asses harnessed with the saddles which are used for carrying turf creels, and which, Charles explained, would be wanted to bring home the wild goats.

From the house, with a pair of Zeiss glasses, the foot of this mountain had appeared quite close to the opposite shore of the bay, but when we got there we found that we had miles

of valleys and bogs to cross. By the time we reached the place I had had quite enough; but Charles was extraordinarily keen, and insisted on going on.

After climbing some hundreds of feet (it seemed like thousands) I would throw myself down in the heather, while Charles and the guide scanned the sides of the mountain for goats; but it was always the same, the goats were higher up, and on we would climb.

At last, when I was about done, Charles picked up a flock with his glasses. They were out of shot except by making a detour of quite two miles. I refused to move, so Charles and the guide went off, leaving Robert and the ass party with me.

And when I had sufficiently recovered to think life worth living once more, I forgot all my woes in the beauty of the view stretching out below me for miles and miles. Probably if we had climbed that awful mountain every other day during the remainder of our stay at Rackrent Hall, we might never have hit on such a perfect day again, as generally the greater part of the mountain was either in the clouds or else shrouded in mist.

There is no doubt that if one would see the real beauty of a country one must see it from a height, especially a mountainous country where one's view on the flat is confined.

On one side lay the open Atlantic, a wonderful deep green, edged with dazzling white breakers near the shore, and a deep lilac towards the horizon. At our feet lay the bay, a still narrow sheet of deepest blue, in places where the rocky sides were sheer, merging almost into black. Across the bay one could see the house and every part of the large demesne, but on such a small scale as to appear unreal. And beyond, as far as the eye could reach, mountains of every size and shape and of every shade of colour; even while one watched the colours changed, and with this change the shapes and contours of the mountains seemed to change also.

We heard three distant shots, and after a long pause saw Charles making frantic signals. Robert set off with the ass party to join him. Eventually on the party making its way down the mountain, I found that Charles had bagged two old goats and a kid; but if the old ones had fine horns their smell was finer. Even the unfortunate asses seemed to be trying to get away from it.

Charles wished the goats taken to the stables in order that he might remove the horns and have them skinned; but for once I asserted my position of an elder brother, and the goats were left at Robert's house.

We found Mary trying to do a deal over some lobsters with a queer-looking old man from one of the outlying islands, whose canoe we had seen at

the slip when we landed, her chief complaint being that several of the lobsters had lost claws, to which the old islander answered plaintively, "But sure, me lady, I couldn't be putting them on agin."

A few days afterwards at breakfast-time Porgeen rushed in with the news that there was a mountainy woman from beyont at the door with a pieceen of paper for Master Charles, and hardly was Patsey able to stop her coming into the dining-room before now. On being told to get the pieceen of paper, Porgeen returned with a dirty half-sheet of notepaper on a silver salver, which he handed to Charles with a broad grin. For some minutes Charles said nothing, then handed the pieceen to me, and I read out the following: "To bridget Faherty for one goateen and its dada and nanny 4 pounds seven shillins."

There followed a long and painful silence, only broken by fragments of Patsey's violent altercation with the angry mountainy woman which came in through the half-open door in gusts, and the feeling of Porgeen's offensive grin. At last Charles, after asking where Robert was, to be told that he had gone to Eastport for the day, slowly and painfully laid four pounds and seven shillings on the salver, and we never heard the word goat again.

(*To be continued.*)

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

THE TOBACCO JAR.

INLAND from Malindi, on the shores of the Indian Ocean, where the Sabaki river meets the sea, is a place called Jilori. Jilori was originally a mission station, and had been occupied by those whose endeavour it was to instil the precepts of the Christian religion into the somewhat unreceptive hearts of the Wa-giriama tribe. The Wa-giriama of late had thrown off all pretence of allegiance to either a spiritual or a temporal power (the latter represented by the British Government), and had broken out in open revolt. Thus it was that the followers of the Crescent had temporarily supplanted those of the Cross, and, represented by Yuzbasha [1] Haganas Kuku and fifty askaris of the King's African Rifles, were upholding British prestige in Jilori.

The white Commandant, with the remainder of the company, was visiting a recalcitrant chief two days' march away; the command of the post therefore devolved on Yuzbasha Haganas Kuku. So it happened that in the cool of the October evening the Yuzbasha, reclining in a decrepit deck-chair (the generous gift of his Commandant), warmed himself at the campfire, for the nights grow chill, even in tropical Africa. He was a grotesque figure, in an unlovely setting. Of gigantic proportions, bow-legged, pot-bellied, he had a head of abnormal size, which seemed like a block of ebony carved into some approximate semblance of human features.

The firelight flickered on this uncouth figure; it flickered on the drooping leaves of the banana plantation, and on the figures of the sentries, carefully posted by the Yuzbasha; but no gleam of it could reach the impenetrable darkness of the cactus-thorn which enveloped the clearing where the camp was pitched. Haganas Kuku was slowly polishing his teeth with an msuaki [2] stick. The process was purely mechanical, for he was comfortably reflective. Life after all had its compensations, even in this Allah-forsaken country. He had just eaten to repletion, and, in vulgar parlance, had done himself well. For meat was plentiful, and could be had for the asking, or for the taking if the former failed; and when supplemented by the ration allowance of rice and ghi,[3] was all-sufficing. Moreover, more often than not the few Giriama proselytes, mostly women, who had sought refuge in Jilori until law and order had been re-established, brought offerings in the shape of sweet potatoes and mahindi,[4] and

[1] Captain. [2] Tooth stick. [3] Clarified fat. [4] Indian corn.

these provided a welcome addition to the daily bill of fare. And then there was Mutaresa, the Giriama belle who had attached herself to his entourage; she had undoubtedly brought the culinary art to perfection. Even Amina, his second wife, could not prepare a more succulent mixture of rice and ghi. Neither was Mutaresa herself unattractive, and her kilt of goat-skins, the cost of which was negligible, was just as effective in showing off the wearer's charms, and certainly showed more of them, than Amina's more elaborate costume of cloth which entailed a constant expenditure of many rupees in the dukan.[1] The Yuzbasha's pleasant train of thought was interrupted at this point by the sudden challenge of a sentry. A few seconds later the sergeant of the guard, supported by the company interpreter, led forward a dingy-looking specimen of the usual nondescript local native.

"Warraga,[2] Effendi," announced the sergeant, producing a letter held in a cleft stick.

"Read," Haganas ordered, and the interpreter read by the light of the fire:—

"To the Chief of the Askaris,—Know then that it does not please me that you should be at Jilori. This is my country, in which you have no place. Therefore will I come and destroy you, and you shall be eaten of wild pigs. The head of the big askari like an ape, that do I covet for to fashion it into a tobacco jar to place in my house.

"The words of the chief
Mukoa."

Haganas Kuku was in no mood to deal with the situation that was so suddenly and inopportunely presented to him. Mutaresa's rice and ghi lay heavy on him, and the wheels of his brain worked exceeding slow. The matter was really quite outside his province; the Commandant and his karani[3] were the only people who dealt with warragas. He felt a personal sense of injury at having to concern himself with the affair at all, more especially after a full meal. At the same time his subconscious mind was perpetually thinking, in its obscure fashion, what the Commandant would do under the circumstances. A fitful breeze fanned the fire, and the Yuzbasha's eye lighted on the miserable specimen of humanity who had brought the letter. Clothed with a shred of skin looped round his middle, he stood hunched up under the watchful eye of Shawish[4] Faragalla Suliman, the commander of the guard. The Yuzbasha's well-filled belly revolted at the sight of so much emptiness exemplified by the ill-covered bones of the emissary. Here at any rate was some promising material to work on; some inspiration would assuredly come after a few strokes of the korbash[5] on the dirty shenzi.[6] Then again his inner conscious-

[1] Shop. [2] Letter. [3] Clerk. [4] Sergeant. [5] Whip. [6] Outcast.

ness reasserted itself. He was for the time being the representative of a government which prided itself on impartial justice; moreover, his own commandant held decided views on the indiscriminate use of the lash. No, this would not meet the case. The karakol[1] was the only immediate solution; that, he was certain, would meet with the approval of the Commandant, if only as a precautionary measure. He therefore ordered Faragalla Suliman to dismiss, and to confine the prisoner pending further orders.

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Dawn was just breaking as the little black sinuous column wound itself out of the thorn zareba at Jilori. Haganas Kuku was going on patrol, or, more correctly speaking, was about to pay a domiciliary visit. Mukoa no doubt was a windbag, but when his words took the form of covert insults, not only to the British Government but also to the soldiers of Islam, and last but not least, to the person of Haganas Kuku himself, then action had to be taken, and Haganas Kuku intended to take it.

The force that he now commanded was not a large one. Military necessity had obliged him to leave twenty-five men under the command of Shawish Faragalla Suliman to guard the post at Jilori, thus leaving him twenty-five at his own disposal. He was in no way disturbed, however, by the small numbers of his force, for he was a firm believer in the official maxim that disciplined troops (especially those of Islam) have nothing to fear from ill-disciplined natives. The erstwhile courier of Mukoa, securely attached to an askari, led the way.

The path lay through dense cactus, varied by the colloquially and aptly named "wait-a-bit" thorn-bush, and at intervals a clearing, planted with banana and cocoanut trees, denoted the site of a village. The little column moved in strict military formation, for Haganas Kuku was no stranger to the principles of bush fighting laid down in Field Service Regulations. He neglected no precautions, even to the right and left flankers painfully hacking their way through the bush with their machetes.[2] The column had been marching for about two hours when they came upon a deserted village. Here Haganas Kuku called a halt. The conscript guide volunteered the information that they were now within the jurisdiction of Mukoa, and the fact that the village was deserted implied that all was not well in the chief's dominions, since the Wa-giriama are assuredly on mischief bent if they leave their villages and take to the bush. On this occasion, save for some doves which made a melancholy cooing, and a few miserable specimens of the chicken tribe which clucked feebly, there was no sign of life. Haganas therefore kept an exceedingly wary eye on

[1] Lock-up.

[2] Large knives.

his surroundings. He was quite convinced that his every movement was even now being watched from the recesses of the bush by the inhabitants of this very village, and the sight of a villainous-looking arrow, newly smeared with poison and presumably left behind in error, confirmed his belief. The Yuzbasha, however, was quite unmoved by this slightly disconcerting fact, and proceeded to refresh himself with madafu [1] obligingly procured by the guide. He was about to give the order to move when what he expected came to pass. A "swish" overhead, and a shout of "nishab" [2] from the scouts of the bush as they doubled back to the column, made the situation quite plain. Haganas' orders were quickly given, and the men automatically spread-eagled out and lay down, forming a rough square. Simultaneously a second flight of arrows, at a slightly lower elevation, hummed overhead, and embedded themselves harmlessly in the centre of the square.

"Volleys ready. Aim low. Present—fire," barked Haganas Kuku, five times in succession, for he was a believer in the clearing volley aimed low into the bush. Something of a conservative, his predilection was for the old martini, with which only one round could be fired at a time, with the best intentions. But as a progressive government had lately seen fit to issue magazine rifles, Haganas Kuku had accordingly ordered that the magazine should be charged with five rounds only, and should fire be opened, his invariable rule was that the rounds should be expended in volleys, thus obviating all chance of the use of independent fire; the latter he knew entailed a large expenditure of ammunition with marvellously little result.

His five volleys had the desired and anticipated effect: they completely demoralised and dispersed the amateur bowmen of the bush. Moreover, Haganas Kuku was tolerably certain that not all of the 125 bullets had "gone west"; the flankers reported blood-spoor, and more than one crumpled form amongst the thorns testified to the efficacy of the volley.

The Yuzbasha, however, regarded the affair as merely a small and unimportant passing incident, and did not greatly concern himself with the number of casualties inflicted. He gave the order to re-form, and once more set his column in motion. Before leaving, however, he committed an act of incendiarism: he set fire to the village and left it burning behind him, as a slight sign of his disapproval of the hospitality offered by its inhabitants.

Haganas Kuku was a believer in "smoke tactics."

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The doctrine had been assiduously preached amongst their followers by Mukoa and other agitators that the Government rifles emitted smoke only, and were of small account when

[1] Cocoanut milk.

[2] Arrows.

opposed to the arrows of the Wa-giriama. Colour had been given to this assertion by the recent murder of two unfortunate policemen who had expended all their small supply of ammunition with no appreciable result, and had then been butchered. Haganas Kuku intended to demonstrate to Mukoa, and to his credulous followers, the unsoundness of his smoke theory; and as, according to the guide, Mukoa's village was now only half an hour away, it seemed likely that the opportunity of making his demonstration was close at hand. The distant beating of a drum announced that suitable preparations were probably in progress for the reception of the column, and that Mukoa was also preparing to put his theory into practice. The column advanced steadily, the beating of the drum intensified, and finally the path emerged from the cactus-bush, and Haganas Kuku saw his objective. Mukoa's village was in front of him, about six hundred yards distant, standing on a slight rise surmounted by cocoanut palms. It formed a perimeter, and consisted of about five hundred huts. The din from the village suddenly became deafening; not one drum, but many beat, and outside the perimeter a howling mob danced and gesticulated. Haganas Kuku made his plans with quick decision. He continued his advance, this time in extended order, and was met by a shower of arrows which came apparently from nowhere. One of them landed in the sole of his boot; he pulled it out, and mutely thanked Allah for the good leather provided by the Government. Taking advantage of an intervening patch of cover, he now detailed Juma Ahmed, his onbasha,[1] and directed him to carry out a flank attack. Juma Ahmed slid away sideways, and Haganas himself, with the remainder of his force, formed square. His tactical manœuvre had been made behind the opportune patch of cover, and had therefore escaped observation; but when he advanced into the open a renewed outburst of jeers and vituperation greeted him as his reduced following became apparent. The arrows of the Wa-giriama had indeed played havoc, even as Mukoa had promised. Half the English askaris were destroyed. Here was their chance. With a deep, full-throated roar the howling mob surged down the hill, discharging arrows wildly as they came. Haganas Kuku was quite deliberate. He formed his little square into line so as to obtain as full a volume of fire as possible, and trusted to Allah to protect his flanks and rear. He allowed the oncoming horde to advance within three hundred yards, and then opened fire. The modern rifle is no respecter of persons, and fifteen fired simultaneously, at intervals of less than a second, can have but one result when fired into a

[1] Corporal.

compact mass of humanity three hundred yards away. The oncoming surging horde, something resembling a steam-roller out of control down a hill, came to a sudden pause with a figurative grinding of brakes. Haganas Kuku's volleys had found their target, and the sullen roar merged in a moment into a shrill crescendo of shrieks. "Ma-ma, Ma-ma," cried the stricken steam-roller, as one dancing, gesticulating form after another gave a final contortion and subsided into itself, and others fled into the safety of the bush. The wheels of the steam-roller, so to speak, had broken away from the chassis, which, losing its supports, became inanimate and helpless. The Wa-giriama, in other words, halted in confusion and terror, uncertain whether to advance or to retire. It was an anxious moment for Haganas Kuku, for two thousand to sixteen is long odds, whatever the compensations of the minority in arms and ammunition, and Mukoa's archery, wild and ill-aimed as it had been, had taken serious toll of his small force. Four askaris lay writhing, and poor old Feruz Leghi, the Yuzbasha's orderly, was literally transfixed by an arrow through his groin. The poisoned arrow of Africa is no myth, and its effects are quick and deadly; in less than ten seconds his loyal old soul received its passport to the happy hunting-ground of the faithful, and his old parchment-like face smiled a contorted farewell. Haganas Kuku had a great affection for Feruz Leghi; they had fought together in the mutiny of '97, and in numerous minor campaigns besides, and for the moment the Yuzbasha saw red. He so far forgot himself as to empty six rounds from his Government revolver into the now stationary mass of tribesmen. The revolver was not a weapon he favoured, and the Commandant had made some caustic remarks about his last revolver practice. Nevertheless, he reflected that as this time the target was too big to miss, he could do no harm, and might even do good. Haganas Kuku maintains that it was these six shots which saved the day. For it was at the very moment before he fired them that some of the more daring of Mukoa's followers, seeing that the opposing force was now reduced to eleven, had decided to fall upon it and annihilate it utterly. But Haganas Kuku's shots made these bold spirits reconsider their plans; again they paused, then broke away into the bush as a burst of firing broke out from behind them and a column of smoke rose from the village on the hill. Assuredly the devil helped his own, and the English were greater than Mukoa, and with screams of terror the remnants of Mukoa's army precipitated themselves hurriedly after their ringleaders, Haganas Kuku firing a parting volley to speed them on their way. Juma Ahmed's flank attack and Haganas' revolver practice had saved the situation, which certainly

at one moment had looked ugly enough; Juma Ahmed was now obviously in possession of the village, and the day was won. The Yuzbasha considered that the wounded should now be attended to. Two of them had already joined old Feruz Leghi. The remaining two were wounded in the arm and leg respectively, and on them Haganas Kuku proceeded to perform some operative surgery of a rough-and-ready description. The process was simple, and consisted in cauterising the wounds with a penknife, and rubbing in permanganate of potash crystals from the medical haversack. The poison was probably of a less virulent nature than that of the three fatal arrows, and though the patients suffered excruciating agony, the drastic measures overcame the effects of the poison; they recovered, and when the time came, were even able to walk back to camp with assistance.

Juma Ahmed now reappeared, his following augmented by a number of prisoners. He reported that he had met with strong resistance on entering the village, but again rifles had asserted their superiority over arrows,—he had inflicted heavy casualties, secured a large number of prisoners, and finally set fire to the village, which, as the Yuzbasha could see, was by this time a roaring mass of flame. Mukoa himself was among the slain, but he had surely lived long enough to discover that all smoke theories were not as unsound and as difficult to demonstrate as his own. Juma Ahmed's report was most satisfactory; the Wa-giriama had been taught their lesson, Haganas Kuku's domiciliary visit was over, and it only remained to bury the dead. Feruz Leghi and the two askaris were accordingly given burial with full Mahommedan honours, as befitted soldiers of Islam falling in action, and the campaign was over.

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A few days later the Commandant sat in the Yuzbasha's banda [1] hearing the more unofficial details of the day. Haganas Kuku's narrative was a vigorous and picturesque one, and compelled attention, and it was only as the Commandant was rising to leave that he noticed a strange-looking object in the corner. It curiously resembled a human skull, and appeared to be full of tobacco. "You are certain," asked the Commandant, "that the chief Mukoa was amongst the slain in the village?"

"It is certain, Effendi," answered the Yuzbasha, "for as I myself doubted, I sent two askaris to see. They found him in the village, and Miskin Abdul brought proof. Therefore I know that the Chief Mukoa is dead, and that his words were foolish boasts have I proved also."

At this point the Commandant left the banda. Further questions seemed superfluous.

P. C.

[1] Hut.

"AN OLD YARN—LEARNED AT SEA."

BY DESMOND YOUNG.

Not strictly accurate, the title. For we were sitting very comfortably in the dining-room of the little "Hôtel des Anges," our chairs dragged across the sanded floor, and clustered as close round the stove as possible, with the recollection of a good dinner and the prospect of a night in bed to content us.

But the roar and crash of the Atlantic rollers tumbling over the outer reefs filled the room, as the sea itself fills the lives of all who live along that coast, and it was natural that our talk should have been of ships and the men who sail in them.

The more natural, because it was a ship which had brought us all to that remote village, L'Aberwrach, north of Ushant, near the Ile de Vierge Light. The *Blackhill*, four thousand odd tons, Bilbao to the Tyne with iron ore, had contrived in some mysterious fashion to thread her way in fog through the network of the outlying rocks until she "fetched up" on an inner reef, where she lay, pierced throughout her length, the after-part of her covered every high water, exposed to the full force of the weather, and certain to go to pieces in a few hours in the first gale. She represented £150,000 of underwriters' money; the month was October, and our business was salvage. She had gone ashore at the top of high-water springs, and it was necessary to jettison nearly two thousand tons of ore, as well as to patch the holes which the rocks had made, before we could hope to float her.

However, floated she had been, the day before, just in time, and now was safely beached in the tiny harbour, behind the fort which Vauban built against the English.

It was pleasant to drink our coffee in the warmth of the little room, more pleasant still to know that our race with the weather and the seas was ended, and that we should not spend the night picking our way laboriously along wet and cumbered decks to where the carbide flares threw their flickering light around the square of each hatch. For three weeks this had been our evening's programme.

Night after night the fishermen and peasants had worked below in the holds, as others had worked all day, with pick and shovel filling the two-ton buckets with the iron ore, which we had soon come to detest, so intractable and all-pervading was it, and so little did its bulk seem to diminish as a result of their labour.

Night after night the winches had rattled and the derricks creaked as the buckets came up above the coamings. The derrick swung over, "Amène" cried the foreman to the man at the winch, down came the bucket, four men rushed at it, struggled desperately with it, capsized it, and the resulting splash told that the *Blackhill* was another two tons lighter, another two tons nearer safety.

It had been a time of hard unceasing work, with the knowledge that if the weather should change suddenly we were likely to lose not only the ship and all our gear, but the lives of most of the hundred or so men on board of the wreck.

Drive, drive, drive, from dawn to dark, and from dark to dawn again, and still the iron ore, set hard like cement, seemed inexhaustible.

Tired out, we lived in iron ore, slept in iron ore; it filled our eyes, our hair, our food, and stained our clothes the colour of dried blood.

And when the rising tide drove the men out of the holds and the sea began to come rolling over the after-part of the ship, the weary business, repeated every high water, of hoisting the motor-pumps out of the way to the ends of the derricks, began again.

Hard work, and needing good men for it, who would work at the end of a long night as at the beginning. As to that, we had none of us seen better men than these Bretons.

Through the half-open door we could hear them in the bar, discussing over their glasses of *vin blanc*, "Le sauvetage du *Blackhill*," as no doubt they will discuss it in L'Aberwrach for many years to come. However, "Le sauvetage du *Blackhill*" is another story, and even we had come to the end of it for the time being. The talk had turned to other ships, and particularly to the "Lochs," in which the three others had served their time, and there is the explanation of the title, for Masefield's "Loch Achray" went running through my head as I listened:—

"The *Loch Achray* was a clipper tall
With seven-and-twenty hands in all,
Twenty to hand and reef and haul,
A skipper to sail and mates to bawl
'Tally on to the tackle fall,
Heave 'n' start her, heave 'n' pawl'
(Hear the yarn of a sailor,
An old yarn—learned at sea)."

There was no lack of stories, for the "Lochs" were famous ships in their day, ships which, for all the trailing smudges of smoke that rim the horizon, have left the sea the emptier by their passing. Beauty and utility no longer sail hand in hand, and the "Lochs," with their towering topgallant masts and their spread of canvas, are gone, to lie rotting in some deserted basin, to be degraded into coal-hulks, or, greater degradation perhaps, to plod round the world, dirty and uncared-for, with their rig cut down, in the hands of a dago crew.

"Forgotten, save in the hearts of those who knew the ships and loved the men."

They worked steadily through the list, with great attention to accuracy of names and dates, reminding each other of Patman and Martin, those famous skippers who swore that they would never stand in front of a funnel, and how Patman got his leg crushed off the Horn and amputated it himself with a penknife, and thought nothing of it. "A hard case." How the second mate and the bo'sun of the *Loch S*—— got three months in Melbourne for raiding a cemetery and stealing tombstones to make holystones for the decks. How each of them had deserted at different times in different ports, one to join the fire-brigade in Sydney, another to make his way to Klondike in the gold rush. They talked of the men and the girls they had known in various ships and places about the world; of the way, as apprentices, they had cut through the bulkhead into the store-room to steal sugar, and the hiding they had got for it; of the hard times they had had; of icy nights aloft when nails pulled off on the frozen canvas, and the flesh came off their fingers to the bone; of brutal Yankee mates, of ships that killed a man each voyage, of shanghaings in San Francisco in the old days, of quick passages and slow passages—all the usual yarns of sailormen. There was the tale of the bo'sun of the *Loch* ——, who had a habit of beginning slowly and consequentially: "In 1884, when I was bo'sun of a steamer," but, in the eighty odd days out to Australia, was never allowed to get any further; and the tale of the shipwrecked men in the open boat who killed and ate the boy the day before they were picked up. All kinds of tales.

Gradually I dropped off to sleep, hearing dimly snatches of conversation, such as—"There was a fellow I was shipmates with once that thought he was a don hand at killing pigs, and, of course, he being the cook, the pig would always come to him." "Naturally, as third mate in those days, I had to do everything the men thought *infra dig.* or the boys wouldn't do without a hiding." "Steal! they'd steal your shoe-laces if you didn't keep walking," until I was awakened by Capt. T—— saying, "It was when I was in the *Loch Torrens* that I came across a real Romance of the Sea."

T——'s experiences ranged from gun-running for the King of the Hedji to helping girls to escape from white-slave dealers in Buenos Ayres, and he was usually worth listening to.

"We were lying in Rio," he said, "bound for Sydney. Martin was skipper, and I was an apprentice. I suppose it must have been my first or second voyage.

"It all started with the cook.

He died or cleared out, I forget which. Cleared out, I expect, because we had a couple of hard-driving mates in her then.

"Anyway, we were left without a cook, and none of the crew fancied the job. At least they fancied it all right, but as there wasn't one of them could cook hot water without spoiling it, they didn't care to volunteer for it.

"However, as luck would have it, Martin himself, coming back to the ship one night, picks up a fellow ashore by the name of Jack Welsh. He was a real old sailorman, a proper old whale, every hair on his head a rope-yarn, and every finger a marlinspike, as they used to say. One of the kind that's only on the beach long enough to have one good drunk and spend all his pay-day, and back to sea again with clothes and everything gone, except what they stand up in. One good drunk, and nothing in the world to show for a year's work or more.

"He was right down and out, had been sleeping in the coal, and living on 'casach,' don't they call it, a kind of meal they make drink out of. A proper scarecrow he was when he came aboard. I suppose he'd missed his passage when his ship sailed, and couldn't get another.

"However, he said that he had the name for being able to cook, and, as it turned out, cook he could; he cooked fine. But there wasn't much he couldn't do aboard a ship. He was the old sort: you don't find them nowadays.

"Well, old Jack and me got pretty friendly. You know what boys are, always hanging round the galley to see if they can pick up something to eat. Sometimes he'd chase me away out of it, but usually he'd let me stop and talk to him, or listen to him talk. I was pretty quick, and I think he took a sort of pride in teaching me how to splice wire and make all sorts of knots—double Turk's heads and so forth, and cut little fans out of wood, or make full-rigged ships to go inside a bottle, and in asking me the names of ropes and such.

"I've told you he was a real old sailorman, always doing something or making something when he wasn't busy in the galley. I've seen him cuff a boy's head until he cried, for wasting a drop of paint. Not that he cared for owners (he'd blackguard them for long enough, and call them all the names he could lay his tongue to), but he liked to see things done shipshape and properly.

"He'd been to sea all his life, and he'd yarn away for hours about the ships he'd served in, and the ways of the men in them, and I'd sit there and swallow it all, and ask him about different places he'd been to. Not that he cared much about places. One place was much the same as another to him, wherever it was.

"It was a few days before

we were due into Sydney that he told me he was going to turn over a new leaf and settle down ashore. You know the story. When a man has a biggish pay-day coming to him, he begins to flatter himself on having been thrifty, forgetting that he hasn't had a chance of spending it. I was eleven and a half months aboard a ship once without ever going ashore.

"However, it appears that old Jack had run away to sea when he was twelve. His father was in quite a big way down in Maine, and wouldn't hear of him going as an apprentice. He'd followed the sea himself, I suppose, and wanted his son to start where he left off.

"Anyway, Jack had run off like the boys in the books, and at sea he'd been for forty years or more, with never a word from home.

"Nothing strange in that, seeing that they didn't know where he was. He told me that he had meant to write, but somehow he'd put it off—for forty years! Well, I'm not a good correspondent myself.

"However, before we picked him up in Rio, he really had found the time to write; told his father that he meant to save his pay-day instead of blueing it after the next voyage, and asked him to give him a share in a schooner and he'd settle down.

"I remember I was a bit surprised. 'Has your father got schooners, Jack?' I asked him. 'You bet your sweet life he has,' he said, 'and ships too—bigger ships than this one.' Well, of course, I didn't believe that, and didn't think anything more about it, and I don't suppose he did either. At any rate, he never mentioned it any more.

"We were bound home from Sydney to Hamburg, and I remember we made a smart passage. Old Martin was the fellow to carry on. Everything set until you'd expect to see the sticks go over the side, and even the mates used to get scared.

"The same day as we docked in Hamburg I happened to be on the poop doing some painting, or rather getting ready to do it if the mate came along, when I saw two gentlemen on the quay, looking as if they wanted to hail the ship.

"The English and the American consul it was, as it turned out, though, of course, I didn't know that then.

"By-and-by one of them sings out to know if the captain is aboard. So I get hold of the steward and he goes in and tells the old man, who asks them to come aboard, and they all go into the after-cabin under the break of the poop.

"I heard them talking for a bit, though I couldn't catch what they were saying, not liking to go right up to the skylight; and then out comes one of them, a proper lawyer-looking sort of chap, catches sight of me again, and asks me

if 'I'd be good enough to ask Mr Welsh to step this way for a moment.' I suppose I looked at him a bit stupidly. At any rate he raps out, 'Come, come, you must know Mr Welsh, who is, who has been employed as cook.' Well, I knew old Jack, of course, though it was the first time I'd ever heard him called Mr Welsh, and I shot off to the galley and told him he was wanted. Along comes Jack, who was in the middle of dishing up the dinners, and this lawyer fellow goes up to him, and shakes his hand as large as life, and says, 'I'm pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr Welsh,' much to old Jack's surprise, and they go into the cabin together.

"You can bet I did my best to find a bit of painting that wanted doing round the skylight. But the mate came on the top, and as he couldn't very well try and listen and me there, he chased me out of it, being as curious as I was.

"Well, nothing happened for about ten minutes.

"Then suddenly I see old Jack dash out of the cabin and along the deck like a rat up a rope.

"In he goes into the galley, and in a minute there was hell's delight going on in there. First he rushes out with the dinners and drops them all in the ditch. Then he starts in with the meat-axe, and breaks every plate and mug and dish in there and slings the pieces on the deck; and singing at the top of his voice all the time—

"Blow to-day and blow to-morrow,
Blow, boys, blow;
And blow for that old ship in sorrow,
Blow, my bully boys, blow."

The skipper came along and tried to quiet him. 'Never mind, skipper,' he says, 'I'll buy the ruddy packet and give you the sack. Yes, and the mate too.'

"Well, I told you it was a romance of the sea, and so it was. It seems his father had died, and had left his money equally between Jack and his only sister. The sister had married a rich man, and he'd died and left her all his money. Then she'd died and left the lot to Jack, if they could manage to come across him. And there it had been for years, and the interest mounting up all the time. And there it was now, seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars of it, and every cent of it Jack's. Can you wonder at his being a bit above himself?

"Of course they wanted him to go back to Maine to see the lawyers, and the skipper agreed to pay him off at once. It so happened that we had an old sailmaker—just such another as Jack—and in the ship lying astern of us was a fellow with whom he'd once been shipmates.

"Nothing would content Jack but that these two should go back home with him, and, of course, they didn't object.

"Then they wouldn't sail in anything but a British ship.

So that meant going across to England and up to Liverpool.

"Before they started, Jack whacked out his pay-day amongst the crowd, and, to cut a long story short, the last we saw was the three of them in tow of the consul. And I expect he had a job to keep a hold of them and see them safely shipped off."

Capt. T—— paused, and we thought that this was all there was to his romance. However, after a minute, he went on. "I didn't hear the rest of the yarn until about fifteen years afterwards. I was in the South American trade at the time, and it so happened that I was having a drink in a house in South Castle Street with the victualling steward of the Cunard Line.

"Naturally enough we were talking about passengers and the ways of them, and comparing the crowd in the Western Ocean trade with the bunch we used to get going down to the Plate. There are all sorts and sizes of passengers, as you know if you've ever been in the trade, and I could tell you plenty of yarns about them. However, that's neither here nor there. But this fellow (I forget his name now) happens to say, 'I suppose we've both met some funny passengers, but the funniest lot ever I run up against was when I was chief steward of the *Lucania*. They were three old hard-shell sailormen, and one of them, Welsh, Jack Welsh, had come into money, pots of it, I believe. I suppose they'd all of them spent three parts of their lives in the fo'c'sles of ships, but here were my lords cabin passengers in the *Lucania*, and with the three best suites in the ship at that. It appears that nothing else would do for them.

"'The cabin steward saw what he was up against directly they came aboard. The first night out he asked them if they'd like their grub in their room. But not a bit of it. They were going to come into the saloon with the toffs, and sit at the captain's table, too. However, they only had one look in, and when they saw the passengers in evening dress, Jack sings out, "Suffering sailor, this is no place for us," and after that they wouldn't face it again.

"'You remember, all the top suites in those two ships used to have a cabin steward specially told off to them.

"'Mr Welsh and his friends found a new use for theirs. Each steward had to have a basket, and each basket had to have a dozen of beer in it. And, wherever they were or wherever they went, the steward had to be just astern of them, so that, if they ever put a hand down, they always brought it up again with a bottle of beer in it. That used to worry the stewards—that, and the fact that they always insisted on turning in in their clothes, boots and all. "Never you mind, my son," they'd say, "don't you sweat yourself

about the bedding; you lash it up, and when we get to New York we'll pay for it, and take it ashore with us."

"'Some of the passengers took quite a fancy to them, and wanted them to sing at the concert, and when they'd had a few bottles of beer, they said they'd oblige. They started off with—

"We had no costly winding-sheet . . ."

but when some one said that was too melancholy and asked them for something more lively, the skipper had to stop them quick before the ladies realised what it was all about.

"'Never mind, though, taking them by and large, they were good old stiffs.

"'I remember, the second day out, they came to the skipper and asked if they could give two bottles of beer a day each to all the sailors and firemen. Of course, the skipper sent for me, and asked me if there was enough beer in the ship, and I had to tell him that it would probably mean the passengers going short before we reached New York.

"'"To hell with the passengers," says old Welsh, "passengers can drink wine. I'll buy up all the beer in the ship for the boys."

"'And he bought it. The sailors and firemen had two bottles of beer a day each for the rest of the voyage!'

"And that," said Capt. T——, "was the first and last ship ever I knew where they did."

HEATHER MIXTURE.

BY KLAXON.

CHAPTER X.

THE Westleigh Horse Show was a county event; everybody who had any connection with horses or who owned an acre of land in a thirty-mile radius was bound to be there. The Hunt, of course, was strongly represented—in fact, the Horse Show Committee was practically the Hunt Committee, and there was a separate enclosure for subscribers. The huntsman and whips were there, acting as executive assistants, and (in their best uniform) were mounted on the pick of the Hunt horses. Needless to say, the majority of the prizes were for riding-horses, and the jumping classes were numerous. Dicky's big Peter was entered for the Hunt competition, and the clause in the rules that stipulated that such entrants were to be ridden by subscribers had cost Betty's father twenty-five guineas: the secretary who had instituted this competition was no fool in financial matters. The Open Jumping was concluding, and two old stagers of the ring were preparing to jump off a tie for the second time that year, when Betty slipped away from the car to the line of temporary stalls at the back of the enclosure where the horses waited. Carson, her host's groom, was waiting for her, and as she approached she saw her host, Sir James Glaisher, coming from Peter's stall. "Well, young woman?" he said. "Feeling nervous? You've got lots of time. I think I'll take you back to the car and give you a glass of champagne, eh? No? Well, perhaps you're right. Now, I've just been talking to Carson, and I've made him put a martingale on that horse. Dicky may be used to his ways, but he's not tried him in a show-ring yet. It can't make much difference to the horse, and what it does make will be on the right side Can't have 'em too collected, you know." A burst of cheering sounded from round the ring, and the band began playing. "Right you are, Carson—bring the horse out."

Betty was a little disturbed in her mind. Dicky's letter, in which he had consented to her riding Peter in the show, had not been long or discursive, but it had certainly stipulated for the absence of a martingale. It is difficult, however, for ladies of seventeen,

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however modern they may be, to argue with hosts of mature age and experience, and Betty allowed herself to be swung up to the big horse's back without voicing her doubts. A moment later she forgot such trifles in the thrill of excitement that went through her as she looked out across the crowd from her commanding elevation. Carson took a rein and began to lead Peter up and down among the round dozen of other entrants that were parading near the entrance to the show-ring. A sound of hammering from beyond the crowd spoke of repairs and preparation of the fences. Peter was a long-legged chestnut of queer temper, good breeding, and undeniable pace and jumping power. His manners and temper accounted for Dicky's possession of him, his late owner having parted from him in haste after a distressing episode at a meet of hounds, which had started with a light-hearted use of heavily-rowelled spurs, and had finished with five terrific bucks and a smashed hat. As a hunter he was excellent, if you knew his particular dislikes—dislikes which were fortunately forgotten when hounds were running; as a hack he was, owing to his nervous and uncertain ways on the road, hardly a lady's horse. To-day Betty had an inkling of trouble: the horse was very much on his toes, was rather fidgety, and had a tendency to throw his Roman-nosed head about—a trick he had not shown before. An official called out a number, and a neatly-dressed youth on a rather weedy blood mare turned into the enclosure to be greeted with a storm of hand-clapping. A single cornet sounded, and Betty knew that in a few minutes the same cornet would sound again to signal the beginning of her ordeal. She heard Carson saying something about the car and "Mr Dick," but paid no attention; she was taking a quick glance over her own clothes at the moment, for if she was going to break her neck in five minutes' time she did feel it important that she should be able to stand close inspection in the mortuary. Her neat rig passed the critical review successfully, and she felt better. She had when dressing that morning taken into account the possibility of concussion, fractured femurs, and other mishaps which would imply her being disrobed in an ambulance tent by a strange doctor and yet more critical female friends, and with true feminine forethought had donned her best *crêpe-de*—. An official called a number that seemed familiar to her, and she felt Peter's head turned towards the gap; she gathered up the reins and settled closer in the saddle.

A group of judges, a low hurdle, a mass of white faces, and a feeling that the ring was absurdly small and cramped. Somebody beside her smiled

encouragingly and patted the horse's neck, a cornet sounded, and she was away. Peter flew the hurdle in a twenty-five-foot leap, pig-jumped twice, and plunged at the first jump —a five-foot gate. His head sawed from side to side, the reins slipped in her hands, and she knew what was coming. He refused, and refused with a sideways plunge that brought her a cheer for her firm seat as the horse swung round. Peter plunged back a few strides—then she got his head round, and instantly he went up on end. He came to earth and tugged at the hard-held reins for a chance to rear again. A figure in a brown tweed suit vaulted the white palings ten feet away and seized the horse's head, jerking the curb-rein from her hands. The stranger seemed mad, but as Peter seemed mad too this did not surprise her at all. She had a glimpse of a brown hand that slashed quickly with a very sharp pocket-knife, and she realised that a new standing martingale had been ruined in two seconds or less, leaving a short end on the nose-band and another on the girth. A brown face spoke with a snap over Peter's forehead—"*Damn it,* I told you not to put it on. You've got two minutes. *Get on!*" She clamped her legs down to the saddle-flaps, swung the horse round, and saw the gate before her. A moment later it was well below and behind her, and Peter landed beyond it with the elastic mastery of a willing horse. They went round the course like winners round the canal turn at Aintree, jumping big and free and at racing pace. The water-jump came last, and Peter, well warmed-up and thoroughly enjoying it, cleared it by three feet, having approached it at a little over normal National speed. A roar of cheering followed her out of the ring, a judge ran towards her in the entrance with obvious congratulatory intent, Peter gave his best imitation of jumping an invisible six-foot wire, the judge swerved into safety, and she came cantering up to the line of stalls with Carson panting and gasping by her near stirrup.

As the horse stopped she slacked the reins and leaned forward to pat his wet neck. Carson was wildly excited, and full of conversation. "You won't lose more'n half a point, miss, and you'll be second at least. There's only one horse in it that'll beat you—I wouldn't get off, miss: they may call you in again."

Betty looked over the crowd at the ring; a heavy half-bred mare was engaged in knocking the top off every obstacle in the course, and a small bay horse was just leaving through the entrance gate. "How did that bay horse do?" she asked.

"No mistakes, miss. That's a professional jumper, and you couldn't have beat him." A figure detached itself from the crowd in the Hunt enclosure

and strolled towards the horse lines; Betty noticed that it was wearing a brown suit and carried a leather strap in one hand. "Oh look, Carson! My martingale—get it, will you?"

The groom rolled bandy-legged away, and the brown man carelessly threw the strap to him and continued to approach. Betty stiffened a little in her seat. She had only a vague memory of what had actually been said by this very useful spectator when he had so suddenly taken charge of her horse, but she distinctly remembered that his tone had been remarkably lacking in that deferential courtesy which the good-looking members of her sex had a right to expect. As he came close she prepared to smile, holding the accompanying dimples in readiness as a reply to the opening words of the apology he was evidently about to utter. She noted also that he was quite nice-looking and had good eyes; he also gave her a vague idea that she had seen him before. At a distance of a few feet he smiled (quite nicely); then he bent down and touched Peter's near fore fetlock. The horse obediently flexed his knee, and the brown man looked closely at the heel. Betty leaned from the saddle and looked also, suddenly anxious. "Is he cut?" she asked.

"No. Hair's off, that's all. He did it over the double. I thought he would at that pace. Skin's not broken." He let the hoof down and straightened up, smiling at her. Peter turned his head and nuzzled at his breast-pocket. A cold feeling suddenly passed across Betty's waist-belt, and she decided to forgo any questions of apology or rudeness. This man seemed suspiciously familiar with her mount. She released the smile.

"You've ruined a nice new martingale, you know—Sir James, too."

"Well, he told you to put it on. It's his fault, he tells me—not yours. It'll stitch up anyway; you'll get second or third, I think. Even without that refusal they'd have taken off a pip for the pace you went—general form, you know. This horse'll never keep calm for that sort of jumping. He's too keen."

"Well, I wish you'd been riding him. You could have done better."

"No, I couldn't. You've got good hands. You should shorten your stirrup-leathers a little, though—they're so long that your toes stick out a bit." He looked her over appraisingly from her fawn grey hat to her speckless polo boots. She saw approval and a hint even of admiration in his blue eyes. "Hot, isn't it?" he said. "Here, this is a new hanky; have a mop down before you go into the ring." The band struck up again and he looked round. "There go the numbers. You're third—good on you! Go on, Carson, lead him in." He walked away towards the enclosure.

Betty's impression of the winner's parade was not clear. Somebody stuck a rosette on Peter's headstall and shook hands with her. She smiled gratefully at everybody, and sat up very straight and patted Peter; but all the while her thoughts were on Dicky. She had never conceived the possibility of there being anybody in existence who could be so abrupt, tactless, self-centred, and rude in a short interview. As she dismounted by the horse lines and left the horse to Carson, her brain was concentrating on the question of how this young man could be made to feel the enormity of his sins.

She found Dicky by the car; he was sitting on the running-board talking to Anne Glaisher, and explaining his dramatic arrival at the Horse Show. He had apparently decided to turn up earlier, but had missed his train through having called at the Admiralty, where he was detained to give some information to Intelligence on some navigational problem in the Baltic. He had found that his father's touring car had been stored at Westleigh, and had at once seized it from the garage and driven the five miles up to the Showground in ten minutes. Apparently he had missed lunch, and was now having tea off beer and sausage-rolls from the lunch-basket. He jumped up as Betty approached, and made room for her on the running-board. She paid no attention to this hint, beyond remarking that she wanted to look at the cart-horse parade. This was not strictly true, but it sufficed as an excuse for climbing into the chauffeur's seat next to Sir James. That genial old gentleman patted her shoulder and beamed at her.

"Perfectly splendid, young woman. You were the success of the Show. Young Dick's been dressing me down about that martingale, you know, but I still think I was doing it for the best."

"Of course you were. I'm sure it wasn't that that worried Peter. It was the crowd and the excitement really. I won't have you blamed for it."

"Thank you, my dear. That's good of you. Ha! They've finished this entry. We'll have to be seeing about backing the car out, I think. How's Dicky going back? Oh yes—he's got the open car, of course."

He stepped down and called to the chauffeur, and Anne rose and began packing the débris of tea. Elsa, Betty's elder sister, assisted in the general turmoil. Dicky looked round for Betty, and saw her in conversation with a man he did not know, a good-looking but rather stagey personality in beautiful clothes. Dicky decided at once that this man was rather soft about the solar plexus, would not be able to stand a short punch, had too prominent eyes, and was no fit friend for a young girl.

Thus works human nature. He turned to Anne.

"Who's the Dago?"

"Who?" She looked up. "Oh! Mr Hicks—he lives near us; he came last season—hunts, you know. I don't like him much."

Dicky grunted; he appeared in this way to be endeavouring to give Anne the idea that although she was wrong in most matters, she was at any rate on the right line in this case. He walked up to Betty and stood at her elbow without speaking until she turned and noticed him. He was then formally introduced to Mr Geoffrey Hicks.

The two men looked at each other closely. Dicky's gaze was, to say the least of it, provocative; healthy men who have faced danger most of their lives, and who have also passed through a remarkably ruthless war, are a little primitive. Through a combination of health, influence, and careful arrangement, Mr Geoffrey Hicks had been able to avoid serious danger all his life, and had served his country during the recent international differences in a sedentary though useful post at the Ministry of Munitions. A little whisper in his brain told him now that this tanned and clear-eyed person looking at him did not approve of him, and hinted in addition that meetings with such a person would in future be safer if they took place in public. Dicky turned his head and spoke to Betty. "Coming back in my car? They'll be pretty full up in the big one."

She looked at Hicks, and Dicky knew that the question of what car she would travel in for the run home was being broached for the first time. Hicks was not slow, however.

"Why, but Miss Betty's coming back in mine," he said. "We've just arranged it."

Betty looked a little taken aback. Then she made her mind up. Dicky had been abrupt and rude to her—he had nice eyes, with a twinkle,—but that was all the more reason why he should not have his own way. She had also noted the way he had looked at her when he had asked her to come in his car, and she knew perfectly well that she looked very nice in her grey riding-clothes. "Yes, I'm sorry," she said. "You might take Anne or Elsa, though. The big car's so full of tea-baskets that there's hardly room for them."

Geoffrey Hicks showed a good row of teeth as he smiled and walked off to start his car. Dicky remained looking at Betty. She looked at the car. He did not move, and she had to look up at him. To her surprise he was evidently on the verge of laughter. He broke into a grin, an unexpected expression of amusement which he seemed to expect her to share. His enjoyment was infectious, and she could not help smiling also.

"'Member my pyjamas in the train?" he said.

She laughed. "Yes—you were so funny. I tried to be ladylike, though."

"Don't know about ladylike. You'd have burst if the train hadn't stopped. But it must have looked funny—just when I thought I'd got everything packed up."

"Well, you saw me laughing, but you didn't get angry. You did see the silly side of it."

"Yes"—a pause. "You wouldn't have let yourself go if it had been Hicks in the carriage with you, though. You'd have been more careful and not laughed. Well, I'll see you at the house. I'll be just behind you."

He strode away to his car and left her a little puzzled. What on earth did he mean? Was he . . . could he be throwing doubts on——? "All ready, Miss Betty. We'll get out of the crowd while there's room, shall we?" Hicks was evidently rather pleased with himself. As they slipped off the grass into the road and joined the procession of cars leaving the Park, he spoke his thoughts aloud.

"Uncouth sort of chap, that naval man. Ever met him before? Some of those chaps are rough as bargees, you know. No notion of how to treat a girl—especially a pretty one. . . ."

He spoke for some time. He seemed to think he had an idea in her head to combat. As a matter of fact he had, but he was not doing it in the right way. The idea was only half-formed as yet, but she had an inkling of its meaning. Dicky had taken it for granted that she could share a joke in a railway carriage with him, but could not have safely done so with Hicks, because—well, because. People were different, that was all. Also she was not quite sure that Hicks had not commented on her good looks quite often enough recently. When compliments are cheap they cease to be pleasing. Also he was sitting rather over to the near side of the driving-seat, and leaning a little against her. . . .

Mr Geoffrey Hicks left her at the Westleigh gate, and drove away a trifle dissatisfied. His *tête-à-tête* had not been up to his expectations, and a little cloud had risen on the horizon of his enjoyment.

Dicky's car came up the drive behind her, and she jumped on to the offside running-board as it passed. The driver smiled, but said nothing. She had almost expected him to say something on the subject of the departed Mr Hicks, but he had evidently forgotten that gallant admirer of hers. The car swerved from the front of the house and ran into the stable-yard. Dicky pulled up at the coach-house door and jumped out. "Going to look at Norah," he said. "Peter's just behind us. I saw Carson bringing him across the down."

He walked to the stable door and spoke as he opened it. "Hey—L'il lady," he said. "Here's uncle!" The mare whickered at his voice, and as

he opened the loose-box door she came round with a clatter, her lean head held high, nostrils wide and blowing. He threw an arm under her throat and stroked her neck while she flirted with him as only favourite horses can do. Betty stood a little way off and watched them. She was at the moment just a little jealous. She had grown very fond of Dicky's two horses, and had developed the feeling that they were fond of her. This open flirting between the mare and her master seemed rather heartless. As if she had spoken her thoughts aloud, Dicky looked back at her from the mare's shoulder. "Bit of an interloper, aren't I? Coming back like this. . . ."

"Hardly that. It was very good of you to let me ride them. They're both dears."

"Well, you've done me a good turn. Got 'em fit for me without spoiling their mouths. I told Anne you could ride Peter in the Show because your hands were all right."

"But you didn't know anything about it."

"Yes, I'd guessed it was you I'd seen in the train when Anne's letter came, and I remembered where the stirrup-leather marks came on your riding-boots. Can't have hands unless you sit right. Your legs are the right shape, too. Not knock-kneed."

Daisy studied him closely. Did this anatomical conversation mean . . .? No — she smiled again. He was evidently thinking of her build just as he would of that of a horse or an athlete. The experience was new to her, and she rather liked it. This man was refreshing.

"Do you look at all women you see as critically as that? I'm glad I passed muster, though——"

"Only if they're possibles." He voiced what she had guessed a moment before. "Men, girls, and horses—it's all commonsense. If they're out of training or badly built they're not worth betting on."

"You're a boxer, aren't you?"

"Yes." He walked to the door to look at Carson washing out Peter's feet in the yard, turned, and came back to Norah's head. "I'm like an old Greek. I like to see a perfectly-built light-heavy-weight with his muscle on the back, where it should be; and, of course, perfectly-built animals like blood-horses or decent girls are good to look at. I hate a fat man and I detest a soft man. A chap's got to make the best of himself."

Norah left him and moved across to interview Betty. Dicky did not seem to mind. "What d'you think of this one?" he asked.

"Well, she's better bred and faster than Peter, but she's not such a perfect jumper. She flies things so. But I like Peter best, I think. He's so wicked."

"Yes—you would. When's the next meet?"

"The day after to-morrow—at Thenstan."

"You'd better ride Peter, then. I like this one best."

"But I can't go riding your horses—it's nonsense. We arranged to hire horses for me till I go, and there's one of your uncle's, anyhow."

"I know, the one he wants to sell if he can find a lamb. Don't be silly. Why shouldn't you ride mine? Look here, I like you and you've got good hands; if you were a boy I'd still offer you the horse for the same reason." He leaned against the side of the box, smiling at her. "Are you scared of accepting?"

She looked at him gravely, and somehow Mr Hicks kept recurring to her mind. She had used that admirer to make Dicky feel hurt, and now she felt that her little freak of feminism had been something rather trivial and petty. It seemed to her that she spoke involuntarily.

"No, I'm not scared. I'd like to use Peter very much, and I won't be silly and refuse him. I'll ride him because I don't think you're quite like Mr Hicks." Instantly she changed the subject. "Now I'm going to pet Peter. Here he comes, the old villain." She followed the chestnut into his box, and Dicky walked along the stable inspecting the other horses. Carson accompanied him, replying fully to an interrogatory on the subject of hay, oats, and bedding.

The cubbing season was a dull one as far as sport went, but the late summer, while accounting for the lack of scent, made lazy hacking and pottering about very enjoyable. Betty was not sure that she did not enjoy loafing about the downs with the horses at exercise more than waiting in hot rides and listening to hounds while myriads of flies hovered round her. She had made up her mind about Dicky: he was nice. He talked to her quite sensibly, never got silly, and generally pleased her, because he treated her as if she had common-sense. To a pretty girl this was a welcome change, especially to one who had hardly left the schoolroom. Under normal conditions Dicky would not have had the intuition to behave like this, but something was teaching him what he should do, and he acted instinctively. It did not seem difficult at all. It is easy to be natural. He had an inkling in his mind of what would happen to him to disturb his peace of mind if this boy-and-girl intimacy kept on, and he occasionally had queer waves of tumultuous thoughts. There was sometimes in his mind a feeling of recoil, of caution, and self-warning of the danger of compromising his own happy-go-lucky freedom. At other times he would find it necessary to look away from this slim well-poised girl just because he had momentarily realised her sex. The one thing he kept firmly in his head was the fact that she was "only a kid." The knowledge that Mr Geoffrey Hicks (if that worthy had ever thought of it in that way) was forgetting

this allowed him to refrain from any sign of hostility towards him when he talked to Betty out hunting. Hicks could be trusted to make mistakes without help, and all Dicky needed was an opportunity of accentuating the heinousness of such a mistake when made.

It was on the 6th of September when the official letter came for Dicky, and he read it with mixed feelings. It was at the same time a nuisance and a compliment. While in the Baltic he had forgathered from time to time with various representatives of the new States. He had moved about a good deal in his destroyer, and had had many minor diplomatic dealings at Windau, Riga, Libau, and Reval. As a result he had apparently become *persona grata* to certain people up there, and this letter was the result. A personage was about to visit the new States, and had certain naval questions to discuss there. An officer was wanted to accompany him as a sort of aide-de-camp, and Dicky, although on unemployed pay, was offered the job. He did not hesitate, sweet as were the delights of leave and shore life; with a reduced Navy he knew he would be a fool to refuse. He left for London that night.

Anne and Betty saw him off at the station, and walked back together. Elsa had left them to walk into the village. Both girls were rather thoughtful, and they were well up on the path over the downs before either spoke.

"I'm sorry he's gone," said Anne. "You'll be away before he gets back—unless you'll come back too——"

"I don't know. He said it would take two months to do the trip. You know I'd love to come back if father will let me."

"Of course he'll let you. You must come. You know we asked you before to come when the proper hunting started, but you said you'd have to hunt from home."

"Well, you see—I couldn't go on hunting some one else's horses—and besides——" she looked at Anne, and hesitated.

"Yes? You see, he likes you to ride his horses, and he's harmless, isn't he?"

"Anne, if you pull my leg I'll never come back—promise?"

"Promise—I won't try."

"Well, then, it's like this. I'm only half-grown, I suppose, and I get scared of men people. Dick's the first I've met who doesn't make me—you know. I don't have to think what he means when he says anything. He's quite trustworthy, you see, and he talks to me as if he liked me and thought I was a good sort. I'd like to come back next month and ride his horses, and, all right—I'd like it better if he was back too. Now that's all there is, and nothing to laugh at."

Anne did not laugh, but she made a mental reservation that she would remind her friend of the conversation in, say, a

year's time, and would do her laughing then. "Well, I call you both very sensible. Dicky's a dear, and so are you. You won't find anybody at Westleigh trying to spoil things by laughing. As a matter of fact, I think Dicky's rather disappointed you were born a girl. I'm not sure whether he'd prefer you to be a man or a horse. He told me the other day you were devilish clean-bred, and that he believed you'd fight with a broken arm."

A curious sensation ran over Betty, making her feel a little dizzy. This was the first real compliment Dicky had paid her. True, it came at second-hand and was curiously worded, but she knew enough of its author to know that it was about the strongest expression of admiration in his vocabulary. When, after a pause, she felt she could trust her voice again, she talked of dances.

It was raining when Dicky returned to England, and rain accompanied him from Dover to the Admiralty and from the Admiralty down to Westleigh. He had left the Gulf of Finland under a foot of ice, and he found his own country under an equal coating of mud; it seemed a choice of evils, with a slight bias in favour of the mud. You can at any rate shoot and hunt in English November weather, but in Russia and Finland you can only stay indoors and wait till spring comes. He brought back more luggage than he had taken away, and was glad to see that his uncle had met him at the station with the big car. Sir James evidently had an object in getting in touch with him so soon, and Dicky's curiosity on the subject was satisfied as soon as he had shaken hands.

"Shooting the coverts on Wednesday; five guns—one's failed me. To-day's Monday, and I can fill up with a local gun, but I thought you'd like to get a pal from Yorkshire. They did you well there, and it's a chance for you to invite one. Don't suppose he'd come all this way, but it gives him the chance. What about this man Chapman you talked of?"

"Rather. I believe he'd come. That's fine of you, uncle. Shall I wire him?"

"Here you are. Anne knew his address. I wrote a wire from you, and if we send it now we'll get his answer to-night. Read it. . . ."

"O.K. That'll do."

Sir James handed the form to the chauffeur. "Right away," he said. "Hand it in here, and hurry up." Two minutes later the chauffeur was back, and they were crossing the valley on their way home.

Dicky was in high spirits. He had been patted on the back by the Admiralty, and told that his conduct on the trip had been commendable, and that he could go on a fortnight's leave to write his reports before he reverted to unemployed pay. He was glad to be back, and had settled certain doubts th... had been in his mind on the subject of

the danger of flirtations with schoolgirls. He had brought back a collection of amber and furs as presents, and he proceeded to unpack during tea, and elicited delighted comments on his disgraceful extravagance from his aunt and cousin as he handed them necklaces of Baltic amber and armfuls of sable skins. He kept one case, however, securely closed. It contained a huge sable coat with a silver fox roll-collar. It was large and luxuriant, and fit wear for an out-size in profiteers. He had, however, a man's barbaric taste in feminine dress, and cannot be blamed for his choice. The case contained also a four-foot necklace of "blue" Königsberg amber, of large and well-matched beads. These treasures were allocated to the keeping of his bedroom, possibly for ultimate presentation to his mother.

He so studiously avoided asking Anne the question she was waiting for, that by the end of tea she found her patience exhausted. "Betty'll be here to-morrow," she said. "Elsa's not coming this time."

"Good. Horses all right?"

"Yes. She kept on riding them till she left last month, and then father and I worked them. But we didn't do much with them, and they're awfully fresh now. The opening meet was horrid—it rained all day, and it's rained off and on ever since. There's a meet on Wednesday at Bleakdown, and as you're shooting I suppose Betty could take both horses."

"Yes, if she wants to. You going?"

"Rather. I'm not going to walk about seeing you shoot pheasants; besides, father says all girls are as much use as a brass band out shooting. You know what he told Aunt Sarah when she came out with the guns last year?"

"No. Did he tell her off?"

"Not exactly, but she went home. He told her that if she had come out just because there were no men left in the house, he'd send a beater back with her, and she could have her choice of any of them except the keeper's son, who was too young. Yes, you would laugh—but she hasn't been here since, and mother was quite distressed."

"Priceless! and so true. Your Aunt Sarah is a confirmed man-hunter, though she is fifty. Well done, uncle! You've cleared the district of a dangerous animal."

"Ugh. Women aren't wanted out shooting. Can your man Chapman shoot? I've got my usual three coming—the two colonels and the major. He needn't shoot up to their form, but he mustn't pile up runners."

"He won't do that. I don't know what he's like at covert-shooting, but he's a very clean killer at grouse. Wonder if he'll bring his dog down? Don't suppose he will; but she's a beauty, all the same. I'd like to see her working again."

Anne became suddenly busy at the writing-table. "Oh,

Dicky!" she said. "I knew there was something. That school friend of mine, you know, Elsie Hansard—where you stayed to shoot,—wrote to me while you were away and sent you a message. She says, 'Tell him I've seen that picture, and I wish I could burn it.' What does she mean?"

"Oh, that? Why, it's just a picture done of her when she was a kid, and I suppose she thinks it's too flattering now."

"A kid? How old?"

"Seventeen."

Anne saw her chance at last. "Oh! I see—when she was still a baby," she said.

Dicky went upstairs to unpack.

The rain stopped on the Tuesday evening, and Sir James was positively purring at breakfast next morning. Chapman had arrived by a late train overnight, having delayed his departure from the North to the last moment owing to some fluctuation in the markets. He and Dicky were down to breakfast early, and were ready "to the last gaiter-button" as the cars began to arrive with the other guns.

The Westleigh shooting was good; many neighbouring estates carried a greater stock of game, and all had a larger proportion of hand-reared pheasants, but none could equal Westleigh in the sport shown. Sir James's beaters were drilled like a chorus, his rules were clear and drastic without being too rigid, and if the duty of a shooting host is to show sport he certainly represented the ideal. The proceedings opened with a muster of the guns in the library to hear his instructions: this was a piece of routine which had been followed at Westleigh for some twenty-five years—in fact, ever since he had inherited the estate from his uncle.

"Now, gentlemen, most of you know this shoot and all that I've got to say about it, but to save argument I'll say it again. I didn't rear many birds this year, but there'll be a fair show—about eighty per cent are wild, but they'll be none the worse for that. Now the feed's always been put down in the big wood by the keeper's house. We drive that first and drive it uphill—that's three beats: all guns will stand back and take anything coming back. I want the birds forward and uphill. You won't get so much shooting before lunch, but after lunch I hope you'll get some good shots when we send the birds home.

Now as to sparing birds. I'd sooner you got more cocks than hens, but you must never spare a high bird even if you've had a run of hens over you; spare all low, easy, and half-grown birds, and let them all get their height before you take 'em. I need hardly tell you that although nobody can help wounding birds, I'd sooner they were missed than wounded. There will be four men out with dogs, and they should be sent for any runners immediately each beat is over. Thank

you, gentlemen; you all know your numbers, I think? All right, let's get away."

Chapman grunted approvingly as he and Dicky walked down the drive. "A bit of a lad, your uncle, sailor. He and I'd agree on running a shoot. We'll get 'em coming high this afternoon, I suppose?"

"Steeple-high an' right fast. You wait and see; see the Colonel there, the long one in glasses? He'll give an exhibition of pulling down impossibles. I'm a child among these chaps, but thank God they never smile at bad shots. There's the first stand. You'll be end gun. Stand well back, and you'll get some curly ones in front of you over the trees—good luck!"

Chapman stopped at the corner of the covert, dug his shooting-stick into the soft earth, and looked around him. Sir James was on his right, and the Colonel fifty yards farther on. There was a light south-westerly breeze blowing, and the sky was clearing steadily. The covert ended in a tangle of rhododendrons and a sprinkling of huge oak-trees, one of which was about thirty yards in front of him. The big covert was being beaten up-wind, and looking to his left he could see a line of narrow woods running uphill for a thousand yards towards the downs, the lower slopes of which were patterned with coverts of three to seven acres area each. The tapping of sticks made him look to his front and load his gun. A youth who carried his cartridge-bag stepped up to within a pace of his right shoulder-blade. The beaters had started far down on his right, and the first shots came from that direction. Dicky and the guest, whom Chapman mentally designated "The Short Colonel," were coming down the rides behind the drive. A hoarse whisper, "Mark, sir," from behind him made him half raise his gun, and as he did so a cock and a hen showed beyond the top of the big oak. They were out of shot, and going forw—— No, they weren't. They came in a whirling sweep round the top of the tree, turning back to his right front. He missed the cock-bird with one barrel, jerked savagely in front, and pulled again. The bird's head went up, his legs shot down, and he struck the ground in front of Sir James with a heavy thud. A hasty glance as the bird crumpled up showed Chapman that his host had not troubled to move his gun from his hip, or even, apparently, to look up at all. The Yorkshireman felt relieved. It looked as if his shooting was being taken for granted. As a matter of fact, his host was watching him carefully, but would have died sooner than it should be known that he was doing so. Birds began to break out now in front of the Colonel and Sir James, and Chapman watched some pretty shots taken. They were all much the same chances as his had

been—a curling flight with stiff wings, a clatter as the turn was completed, and then the shot taken with a right-handed swing. Several birds rose on the edge of covert and came forward at half the height of the trees, passing on unmolested. Four cocks and a dozen hens came curling round Chapman's oak, and he stopped two of the cocks with three shots. As the beaters came near he missed a high wood-pigeon, and killed a rabbit which rushed out to his left in an attempt to gain a patch of gorse behind him. A few birds broke back low down from the end of the wood, and went away without being fired at. A whistle blew, and the guns walked back to the beginning of the drive.

There were two more beats of much the same type, the guns waiting back instead of at the side, and the shots being more straightforward. The bag for three drives was twenty brace of pheasants, mostly cocks, three brace of rabbits, two pigeons, and a stoat. Chapman wondered a little as to how many they expected to get in the afternoon. He had not been able to see if many birds were leaving covert forward and going up-hill, but he knew that the quite unhurried way in which the beating was being done meant that the birds were stealing out well in front and comparatively noiselessly. He noticed that not a yard of undergrowth was left undisturbed, that the line moved in good order and slowly, and that there was practically no calling or shouting. The common-sense of this appealed to him.

The big wood beaten, they started up the narrow thousand-yard strip, the guns out at each side of it, and the birds that broke back taking a big risk, while those that went forward took none. A lot of the latter were certainly running forward, and those that did fly kept low, and skimmed the edge of the wood as they went. Chapman was one of the right-hand guns, and was on the uphill side. As he got near the end of the long strip he realised the art with which the beating of the big wood had been performed. A steady stream of birds was leaving the strip, and skimming low up the down towards the hill-side coverts to his right. In five minutes he estimated a round two hundred to have crossed in front of him, and he could only see those birds on his side of the covert. He realised that the birds that had come back over the guns must be a very small percentage of those driven.

The guns collected at the top of the long strip, and walked up the hill towards a small farm cottage. Chapman found himself beside Sir James, and at once began talking. His questioning, without intention on his part, instantly endeared him to his host, who stopped in a stubble-field below the seven-acre covert to illustrate his programme.

"Now, you'll be about here for the last drive to-day. The birds will be put up over the brow—as you see, the covert is out of sight of you here—and will make for the home woods. They will have come about two hundred yards when they get over you, and they will have another half mile to go, all downhill, and with a little wind behind them. You seem to have been watching the work this morning closely, so that you can understand that now that the birds are uphill and things have gone quietly and without accidents I am relieved. My anxieties are over, and I can enjoy myself. Ah! I thought you'd ask that. Of course they could easily be running down now over this stubble and going into the long strip again, but we have to stop that. That strip makes a pathway away from home, and I can't let them use it to return. As soon as we go to lunch (by the way, we might walk on, shall we?) a boy comes here and starts walking about and whistling. Now and then he taps two sticks together. That is quite enough to keep the birds up there. There will also be a boy doing the same thing the other side of the strip. When the birds get into the air they would quite possibly go for the long strip also, but—there he is—that beater is putting a white flag down every hundred yards on both sides of the strip. Now, do you see a flaw in the tactics, Mr Chapman?"

"Not a flaw, Sir James. You have followed this method for some time, I take it?"

"For twenty years. And we had not so many pheasants when I started it. Of course, the position of my coverts and the contour of the ground invites such handling, but such things as high rabbit-wire fences are anathema to me. If pheasants won't fly well you must drive them to other coverts from which they *will* fly well, and you can drive a pheasant *anywhere* if you go quietly. A flustered bird is bad shooting."

"Well, I should think some of the shooting this afternoon will be the ideal for pheasants. The stand where you were just now——"

"Yes. I think you'll get some sporting shots. In fact, I may venture to prophesy that some of the birds—when they are coming plentifully, and there is a lot of shooting going on—will pass over you out of shot altogether. But I think you'll get some amusement, Mr Chapman—at least, you won't talk of 'murder' in connection with these coverts. Ha, ha! Eh . . .? Well, here we are—put your gun down and come in. The others will have started lunch, I don't doubt."

Dicky talked grouse-shooting at lunch, and as both Colonels, the Major, and Sir James had good experience of that sport (although the moors they knew were mostly Scottish), the conversation turned to such deep

subjects as disease, heather-burning, and the number of sheep to the acre that a moor could carry. Chapman was really amused at the lunch itself; there was a table-cloth, there was hot game (with bread sauce and salad), there was cold game, and there were sweets and a savoury. In fact, it was a house lunch transferred in its entirety to a cottage on the hillside. He could not, however, feel that it was sybaritic, or that it was in any way intended to cover a lack of sport; it was simply the result of the English habit which causes some men to have the same sort of meal prepared when pursuing elephants on the slopes of Mount Kenya in East Africa as they would expect to have in their homes. It is not a question of luxury, but a sign of ultra-conservatism. The same lunch had been provided in the same cottage for Westleigh shooting parties in the year of the Mutiny, and unless some good reason was produced for changing the practice, it would continue indefinitely.

Exactly an hour was allowed for lunch; at two o'clock Sir James rose and gave the signal to move. The beaters mustered outside—fifteen obvious ex-soldiers wearing brown Willesden smocks. Their Squire was quite military in his desire for uniformity of dress, and he preferred in any case to provide coverings himself of a suitable shade for beating to being compelled to inspect his men with an eye to the concealment of red or white oddments of attire. The men followed the keeper along the side of the down to where three patches of young plantation showed above the real coverts: these were to be beaten out first. Both guns and beaters had an air of suppressed excitement now—everybody knew that the spade-work of the morning was over and that the real thing was coming shortly.

CHAPTER XI.

The guns had only a couple of hundred yards to walk before they reached their positions. They spread out as they approached the covert, and each man on reaching his station stopped and raised his gun at arm's-length as a signal that he was satisfied with his distance from his left-hand neighbour. Dicky was left gun—then came Chapman, the short Colonel, the tall Colonel, and the host. They stood on pasture-land, the covert eighty yards in front of them showing only the tops of its trees over the curve of the hill, while the long strip of wood lay well below them on the slope to the right. The beaters started work as the guns arrived, and Chapman had hardly loaded and looked round at the prospect when a single shout of "*Mark!*" told of birds on

the wing. Two cocks came over the brow, curled a little in their flight, and with steady wings volplanéd down the line from the right. They were over twenty yards up, they were gliding at great speed, and they looked pretty shots as they passed over Sir James. The Baronet hardly glanced up; he kept his gun-butt on his hip, waved his left hand horizontally, and faced to his left to watch the tall Colonel. The slope of the hill was putting the birds higher as they came down, and they went over the tall Colonel at about ninety feet. He half-raised his gun, changed his mind, and waved to the short Colonel, who, to Chapman's intense relief, accepted the chance, and killed them both at well over thirty yards up. The North-countryman decided that if all the birds were going to come that way he was either going to pass them on to Dicky to take, or else go home. He looked to the right again, and saw Sir James shooting; then something caught his eye, and he faced quickly to his front. A stream of pheasants was coming over, none of them at less than sixty feet height—some at twice that. All were gliding, with just an occasional "*p-r-r-p*" of wings to add to their pace. The guns started all down the line, a steady rattle of shots punctuated by the heavy thuds of birds falling, and the quick rattle of wings as the high cock-birds gained more height. Chapman took his shots nearly overhead, and owing to the slope of the hill found that the practice involved his bending like a bow to obtain his lead. Then the sound of birds falling out to his front made him glance at the Colonel, and he saw that that expert was taking his shots as if the birds were high grouse. He was firing at not more than fifty degrees from the horizontal, and firing early. Chapman followed suit, and found to his surprise that at that angle a fast pheasant can be killed a very long way out—in fact, two of his kills nearly struck him as they fell. The covert was only five acres in extent, and the drive was soon over. Chapman made a quick calculation as the beaters appeared, and congratulated himself on his performance. After all, eighteen birds with twenty-seven cartridges is first-class shooting when the birds come well. The beaters gathered the game, and the guns closed on their right to move to the next covert. The lad carrying Chapman's cartridges passed in front of him to speak to the tall Colonel's servant. Chapman, the glow of pride at his own performance still warming his breast, intercepted a short conversation between them.

"What d'you get?" asked the boy.

"Eighteen cocks, seven hens, an' a woodcock. What's yours?"

"Twel' an' six hens. Miss any?"

"Two cocks. What did you leave?"

Chapman walked on. He sincerely hoped his attendant would lie. His neighbour's servant might be minimising misses, but he had a shrewd idea that the Colonel had certainly not spared more than three or four of the feathered bullets that had rushed over him. He was glad to find no reference at all made among the guns as to the number each had killed. The host led straight on to the next covert, evidently fully satisfied with the way things were going, and talking cheerfully to the short Colonel on the subject of Wheat Subsidies, their use and abuse.

An hour and a half later the day ended in a rattle of firing from guns that had hardly been given time to cool all afternoon. The last cock-bird sailed high down the line, being missed by the tall Colonel and Chapman, and killed at incredible range by Dicky's choke barrel as it curled away in front of him in an effort to break back. Two hundred and fifty brace since lunch and a good day. Sir James led the way down the hill with all his wonted hilarity (which had been bottled up by his anxiety as host), bubbling forth in continual chaff. Chapman fell back to join Dicky, and walked downhill with him in silence for a few yards. Then "*Bah* Goom!" he said. "Eh — Sailor — that's a right good champion shoot, an' all——"

"And that's a fact. But you couldn't do a shoot like this more than half a dozen times without getting bored with it. A good pheasant's all right, but he doesn't vary much even if he's good. I think there's more excitement in grouse, because you don't know which way the beast's going to fly next. They don't stick to rules."

"That's true. There's a touch of civilisation about this, whether they're wild birds or hand-reared. Yorkshire's more primitive. Look here, I'm going back to-morrow. You come back with me, and we'll get some fast grouse on Moordyke. You'll get some stiff wind and cold shooting up there now."

"No—I've got to hunt. I'd like to come, but I must see to the horses." He paused, and thought very quickly on the subject of confidences and confessions. Then he drew breath, and went on: "You know when we talked about women and things? About keeping free to do what you liked? You remember we said——"

To Dicky's utter surprise Chapman interrupted. "Aye," he said, "I thought you might've noticed I wasn't quite up to my own talk. You're quick, you know. Maybe it's my talk. I've been trying to talk more English-like for a while back now. You saw that, of course." (Dicky hadn't, but held his peace in amazement. What on earth was coming?) "Of course you think it would be an impossible marriage for both of us?"

"No, I certainly don't." (Dicky could have kicked him. Not knowing what lady was concerned in the case made conversation difficult.)

"You surprise me. No, you don't, though. You can see things I don't. Now, as man to man, has she said anything to you that you could tell me that I ought to know about, or what about it or how?"

Dicky, to his mental credit, understood this sentence, but he wanted time and data, and he played for both. "That's a difficult question to answer," he said judicially; "you've told me nothing that gives me grounds for feeling free to talk about it, if you get me——"

Chapman understood this if the speaker didn't. "I get you," he said. "Well, she came over to Moordyke with her sister, and looked at her picture, and—and then."

Dicky saw light suddenly, and felt an insane desire to shriek with laughter. The idea of Elsie Hansard mated to this hard-faced friend of his was too amazing. It would be like the union of a cinema star with a Calgary cowboy. "Yes," he said—"and then?"

"Well, I got the idea—y'see. Anyhow, I asked her straight out if she wanted me, and she said no."

"She did?"

"Aye. And so I thought there was something in it, then."

"Yes, of course."

"Yes. And I told her I didn't think she'd ever been after me when she was looking for a man. I said I was sure of that."

"You—yes, of course—you told her that."

"Aye, an' she said that was a bloody fact; that is, she said that was so. Aye. And I said no one could say she'd been after me, because they'd see I wasn't the sort she would—see?"

"And she said?"

"She told me I was right. And she said she'd told me no already. So I said, of course, that didn't mean anything, because she knew what sort of things I'd thought about her and her sort before I got like this, and so she'd have to say no right off like."

"You're no fool. What then?"

"That's about what she said. And she asked if I thought she was good-looking. And I said she was that, but she had more in her than that, and I'd have a use for her even if she was ugly."

"Where you get your knowledge of women from beats me, y'know. What did she say?"

"She said I'd better ask you about it. She seems to believe in your judgment. She didn't seem angry like, but she was a bit queer."

Dicky was speechless. As a description of a proposal from a Yorkshire mill-owner, a man who was as tough and straightforward a specimen as could be found in the kingdom, to a spoilt darling of Mayfair, the preceding recital had been quite typical, but he was not quite

sure that the girl had not been noting the performance as a screaming farce for future drawing-room recounting. "When did this happen?" he asked.

"Two days ago. I'd told her I might see you."

They were close on the house, and Dicky wanted time to think. He had no intention of acting as Cupid's adviser to this queerly-assorted pair without some deep thought on the subject. Chapman was evidently perfectly serious, and expected to hear something useful from his friend. It was very improbable, however, that the sophisticated Elsie was in the very least serious. "All right," he said. "We're going to change now. I'll tell you what I think after dinner."

To his relief Chapman accepted this, and did not press him. They overtook the other guns in the hall, and followed their host into the smoking-room.

Anne Westleigh met Dicky on the stairs as he came down after changing. She stopped him, and studied his face in the careful way that women do when they are suspicious. "I've had another letter from Elsie," she said.

"Well?"

"She's put in another postscript for you."

"Well?"

"I don't think I'll tell you. I want to know what these messages mean. . . . She's very pretty, isn't she?"

"Don't be an ass—it isn't me, it's Chapman—what's the message?"

"*Mr Chapman!* Dicky, don't be silly."

"Well, it's about him anyway, whatever she thinks.—What's the message?"

Anne handed him the letter as Chapman appeared on the landing, and descended towards them. Dicky glanced up from his reading to nod as he passed and say, "See you in t' smoking-room." Chapman nodded, and went on.

Tell Mr Fancett that I want to know if it's too late for me to get that picture back, because I'd like to.

Dicky handed the letter back and started down the stairs.

"*Dicky!*" said Anne, "aren't you going to tell me?"

"No," said her cousin over his shoulder. "But I'll bet you Chapman catches the midnight train north to-night—on urgent business."

Dicky was right. Chapman made no excuses and no apologies. He just left at half-past nine, and said he was going to see a lass, and was in a hurry; that he'd enjoyed his visit very much, and hoped to see them all in Yorkshire; and could he get telegrams off this time o' night——?"

(*To be continued.*)

A WHALE-HUNT.

BY X.

THERE may be people who think, as I did till recently, that the pursuit of the whale is carried on amongst no other surroundings than those provided by the Arctic Circles, that the whale is approached as he lies motionless on the surface of the sea, and is stricken with a harpoon projected by man's hand from an open boat. In the offing lies the whaling ship, more or less covered with icicles and threatened with bergs. I imagine that I gained these impressions from certain old books on whaling. There were certainly pictures of the whaling-boat being sent sky-high by a blow from the whale's tail. From which one gathered that it was a form of the chase fraught with perils, liable to end in an icy ducking, and altogether desirable for boys. For aught I know to the contrary, these splendid adventures may still be obtained. But there are other more prosaic and less dangerous ways of killing your whale, under blue skies and in waters where there are no icebergs or polar bears, but where there are plenty of sharks and a plaguy hot sun. This is the only sort of whaling I have ever done. If I could only have another day of it, I'd forgo any chance that might come along of seeing whales killed amid polar surroundings.

I was idling on the quays of that very beautiful town, Durban. I had watched a great pearl-grey liner finish her long voyage and berth herself alongside the jetty without aid of tug-boat, and with as much ease as if she had been a cross-Solent ferry steamer coming alongside Ryde Pier.

Farther up the harbour were to be seen the lofty spars of a tall sailing-ship or two. For still we have these chief ornaments of the oceans, although we are always being told that they are past and gone. There were several gross-looking and quite unbeautiful tramp steamers, whose very masts were derricks. And there was a fleet of red- or white-sailed racing craft scurrying over the wide waters of the great harbour. The purpose and *métier* of all these craft were plain to the veriest land-lubber. But there were some half-dozen stumpy little vessels which puzzled me, little cock-nosed vessels, boasting a funnel and a short mast, with a barrel or something like it about two-thirds of the way up. They were not ocean-going tugs, nor were they steam trawlers. I asked what they were, and was told that they were whalers.

Further inquiries elicited the information that a small fleet of these plied their calling up and down the east coast of South Africa, and had their headquarters at Durban. Away behind a hill on the farther side of the harbour was a flensing station, well out of nose-shot.

One of these little whalers lay alongside the quay close by me. I was seized with the wish to see a whale-hunt. So I stepped on board and asked for the skipper. My experience of sea-captains led me to look on them as rather awful people, completely bound in brass, aloof, and cloistered in enviable cabins on the top storeys of large ships. But here I found a jolly seaman sweeping out a little deck-house, and made of just such clay as I was. I told him my wish, and he seemed to think that the only possible obstacle to my gratifying it was the very early start he was making next morning. He said if I could be on board at 3.30 A.M. I was welcome to see whatever there was to be seen, and that with any luck we should be back in Durban the same night.

That was good enough for me. I collected a companion, and next morning we had walked the two miles, and were on board the whaler in good time. We had brought food with us for the day, and a couple of bottles of whisky. But for all the use we made of them, we might have left them behind.

Some sleepy hands were unmooring, and we made ourselves scarce on the bridge, and with our backs against the rail slumbered till the engines began to rumble, and we began to glide out of the harbour in the darkness. Soon we were clear of the land and gently heaving on the bosom of the Indian Ocean.

When daylight came we were steaming south, and some three or four miles distant from the emerald-green coast of Natal. The greenness was that of sugar-cane, though at that distance it appeared as close and velvety as turf. On either hand of us, and at intervals of about a mile, were other whalers pursuing a course parallel to our own. A hand now climbed up and occupied the crow's-nest on our stumpy mast. Right up on our cocked-up little fo'c'sle the harpoon-gun was unjacketed and loaded. The great barb of the harpoon projected like something unswallowed from the muzzle of the gun.

The gunner came along and explained things to us. Our little ship was from Norway. Skipper and crew were all Norwegians. They had sailed from their home port a year or so before, to whaling waters off New Zealand, but doing badly there, had brought their little vessel half across the world to Durban, where their luck had been better. Small though the ship was, she was by no means an uncomfortable boat, although her coal-

carrying capacity was not great.

The gunner opened a locker, which was divided into pigeon-holes, each containing a white calico bag of black powder, the charge for the harpoon-gun. "The other day," said the gunner, who held in his hand a lighted cigar which he used, and somewhat nearly, as a pointer, "a gunner on another vessel was showing his powder charges to a friend. Unfortunately he had a lighted cigar in his hand, and the whole went sky-high—blown to pieces. A sad accident." He closed the locker, placed the cigar in his mouth, and we breathed again. He took us forward and showed us his gun. It was mounted on a swivel, and had a shoulder-piece, and could be easily and quickly swung to either hand, in order to take advantage of fleeting chances. The harpoon looked like six or seven feet cut off a railway line, its great barbed head detachable from the shaft, and between the two a bursting charge. This latter is actuated by a fuse, which is set going by the shock of discharge, and is timed to go off when well home in the whale. Truly a formidable missile. Coiled down close to the gun was a very powerful line, of some extra special material and make. The end of this is attached to the harpoon. It must run absolutely free, and be stout enough to hold the stricken whale to the ship.

We were anxious to know the range, accuracy, and killing powers of the gun and harpoon. We were told that about forty yards was a safe maximum range, and we gathered that although gunners sometimes miss targets, it is not considered the thing to do. A single well-placed shot may kill a whale instantly, but sometimes three or more harpoons are necessary. Our guide spoke perfect English, and so did the skipper. We were bidden to breakfast with them, and a most excellent meal it was.

When we came on deck again we were still cruising south, over an oily sea, with a very long swell.

Away on our left came the boom of a gun. A cloud of smoke enveloped the bows of one of our little consorts, and it was evident that she was busy with a whale. She turned out of the line and went away northward. A second and a third ship similarly came into action and went away, each under tow of a whale. Then our crow's-nest man hailed the deck in the Norse equivalent for, "There she blows!" A minute or so later we on deck could see two whales, diving and spouting and coming towards us. Every one went to action stationts—he skipper to the wheel, the gunner to his gun, the engineer down a skylight to his engines, while the deck-hands disposed themselves so as to have a pair of eyes looking in every direction. We joined the skipper on the bridge, where a good view all

round was to be had. To us was to be solved a problem that appeared unsolvable—how a rapidly-moving whale, and one only showing itself between dives for a matter of seconds, could ever be harpooned. The procedure on the present occasion, and for this particular kind of whale, was as follows. At this season of the year the whales are all passing on their lawful occasions northward, and not too far from the coast. Each whale, or in the case narrated below, pair of whales, appeared to progress in a series or group of dives, and then in a disappearance under water of some minutes' duration, during which progress northward was continued in a fairly straight line, and at a constant speed. So that, when out of sight, one knew more or less for certain on what line to watch for his reappearance. The whaler had first to get "on terms" with the whale—that is, to be proceeding with him and as near his line and place of reappearance as possible,—ready to take a shot should luck bring the whale up within range. Then when the whale broke surface for his group of dives, the gunner, if not able to shoot at his first appearance, might close up, and be able to do so at one of the later ones. Failing that, he would miss his chance during that series of dives and rapid appearances, and when the whale dived for the last time and was to be some minutes under water before beginning his next series of appearances, the vessel would have to keep steaming ahead on his line so far as she could judge it, and the gunner would hope to be within shot, or at the least within closing distance, when the whale next broke surface.

For the rest, neither the rate of the whale's progress, which is not great, nor his steady line forward, seemed to be the least affected by the proximity of the whaler. In a word, the whale seemed unconscious of pursuit. Our steamer easily got on terms with her pair of whales, and maintained her position for an hour or more. Had the quarry put on pace or jinked about to right or left, matters would have been very different.

As the whales broke surface and slowly revolved like the rims of two huge wheels, which were being heaved round by some agency under water, they presented at about forty yards a very large and not very rapidly-moving target—large both in height and length. And, given readiness and steadiness on the part of the gunner, I do not think that any extreme degree of marksmanship was required. But there are several kinds of whale—the humpback, which was our particular quarry; the sperm, which is the largest, most valuable, and most sought after; the blue whale; the racer; and I dare say others. The sperm whale, I believe, can often be approached and slain as he lies sleeping on the surface. The racer is too

swift in his movements, and remains submerged too long to get on terms with. And the particular methods of pursuit of each kind of whale, one may suppose, will vary in each case. Although we killed a humpback whale that day, that was not the only species making up the coast, and killed by our consorts.

Our steamer, on the whales being sighted, was immediately turned about, and steamed slowly ahead so as to get on terms with them. The skipper, on whose judgment the gunner depends very largely for obtaining a shot, took the wheel. From the skipper's position a good look all round could be had. In a few minutes the two whales broke surface together 100 yards or so abeam of us. Over went the helm, and we began to close. But the last of the dives was completed ere we came within range. So we steamed ahead on the line which, or near which, we knew the whales were pursuing under water. I was looking out to starboard, when the sound of a colossal sigh brought me right about, to see the great pair blowing and diving 200 yards away on our port side. Over spun the wheel, and we began again to close, but it was not to be this time. The next appearance was close to our starboard side. The gunner had made certain that it would be on the port side. Round came the gun, his finger was on the trigger, every one was on the tiptoe of expectation. But the great target was a waning, not a waxing one. The whales had begun to go under ere the sights were on. Gunners don't like missing. What they like is to have the sights almost on as the whale begins to rise, and then to take him at the full. Fire was withheld. This went on for a full hour amid perfect silence, except the slow pounding of our engines, and the sigh and swish of the rolling monsters. Each time the whales rose came the thin spout of water, and the mighty breathing, whether of inhalation or exhalation I know not. Time after time the gunner held his hand. Sometimes it was a waning target before he was ready; sometimes the nearer whale—they continued rising and diving together—offered a slightly oblique target; sometimes the range was a little too great. Not only to us, spectators of a novel sight, but to all on board, it was evidently a time of intense excitement. It was the chase, and not merely bread-winning routine. Two men only were directly concerned—he at the wheel and he at the gun. The engines kept turning steadily ahead, with now and then a quiet word spoken down the voice-tube, and an immediate alteration of speed. Through it all the two whales kept rising and diving together, and apparently in no way concerned at our presence. A quaint-looking pair they were—a huge mouth, a huge tail, and between the

two, depth without much length.

At last the near whale of the two broke surface right opposite the gun muzzle, and at not more than thirty yards' range. Slowly the great mass heaved up and round and over. More and more of it came into view, and then a flash and a roar, and then a little later the detonation of the bursting charge in the harpoon head, and a thick curtain of smoke blotted out all. Whisk, whisk, whisk—the neatly-coiled rope, close to the gun, was snatched coil by coil and rushed, and still rushed overboard, and the eye could follow it still rushing down in a great loop in the clear blue depths, until it rushed itself out of sight. Clearly a heavy fish on that line, and clearly something would break when we reached the tether of it. We seemed to be about to play something mighty big on quite inadequate tackle. If our craft was to act the part of a fishing-rod, it was going to be a very stiff rod. Thoughts like the above flashed through the mind as our line ran out.

The gunner's job was done for the present. He reloaded his piece, while others took up the job. The engines were called up to increase speed. Our rod was to be whippier than I thought; our increased speed was to lessen the jerk on our line. Away we went, all eyes bent forward, awaiting the next appearance. A shout went up as the whales, still in company, rose about half a mile ahead and showed no signs of slackening speed. The gunner had failed to make a bull's-eye. The harpoon had passed right through the whale, and the second detonation was an air-burst and not a burst inside the whale.

A turn or two of the line was round the capstan, and when all the coil had been eaten up, the capstan took up the playing of the whale and slowly gave, or wound in, line just as a fisherman would. It all seemed simple enough: few orders were given, there were few changes of speed, and the man operating the capstan now seemed to be in the leading rôle. Presently we ceased losing distance on the whales. No more line was given except for temporary easements. Engines were rung off, and we were towed. We continued thus for half an hour, and then as the stricken whale began to tire, his companion left him. Steam was now given to the capstan, and we began to wind our way slowly up to the whale. We were in fact not playing the whale back to us, but ourselves up to him. Slowly we approached as the dives became shorter and the motions less vigorous. The water we were passing through was all dyed with the blood of the poor beast. We were now within fifty yards of him as he lay rolling on the surface with scarcely a kick left in that great tail. Still, with fish, great or small, one never knows

for certain about that last kick. We had him fairly beat, that was certain, but the approach to close range was still cautiously made. Slowly we crept up to within thirty yards. It was now no longer a vanishing target about to bob up anywhere but where looked for. The whale lay almost still. The gunner's head sank to his sights, a moment's pause, and then the flash and the roar and the hiding smoke and a dull smothered second detonation. We could hear rather than see a final threshing of the sea. Thank goodness, it was the *coup-de-grâce*. When the smoke cleared the whale was dead. The second harpoon had found the centre and had burst inside the carcase.

The skipper told us that whales are often found in pairs, and with a baby whale with them. If the cow is harpooned, the bull will usually remain with her and be eventually shot. But if the bull is first hit, the cow makes off pretty soon.

It was, if I recollect aright, just an hour since we had first fired at him. Salmon fishers, I believe, allow about one minute per pound to land a fish. Perhaps it would work out to be about a minute a ton for whales! We were quickly alongside, for dead whales will sink, and these waters swarm with sharks that will strip the meat off a carcase in a wonderfully short space of time. To our rigging were lashed a number of long spears. Some half-dozen of the crew now armed themselves with these and stood ready to repel the sharks, who were already in evidence. With as little delay as possible the bight of a chain was passed over the flukes of the great tail, and hove well up and made fast to the fo'c'sle bitts. The whale then lay floating alongside, head to our stern. A hollow harpoon was then driven into the carcase; into the butt-end of this an air-tube was led, and then the whale was pumped full of air exactly as one pumps up a football. During this operation, and leaning over the low rail as I was, I could have driven a knife into a very large shark that with the greatest deliberation swam or rather slid over that part of the carcase which was just awash.

When the whale was well blown up the air-tube was withdrawn, and the whole of its entry carefully plugged and stopped. The shanks of the two harpoons were unscrewed, leaving the heads to be recovered later, and the holes stoppered. The roll of the sea was so slight as to obviate the necessity of the use of another tackle. When two big bodies lie alongside of one another in anything of a seaway, and if they happen to roll not exactly together, they are like to sever any tackle that holds them. In this way a whale may break away from the whaler's side and sink, and so be lost, or at least be heavily mauled by

sharks before it is recovered. So there is another tackle for use in a seaway. This passes from the carcase up to sheaves well up the mast, and thence down to a powerful set of spiral springs located in the hold. In the event of a disparting roll, the jerk is taken up by these springs, and the whale does not break away.

In honour of the catch, the skipper allowed one small nip of whisky to each of the crew, and we were bidden below to an excellent dinner.

With the whale lashed alongside we proceeded to look out for another, and we cruised till late in the afternoon, and saw many other whales. Of these some were snapped up by one or other of our consorts, some were racer whales and a waste of time to pursue, and others, which we went after, we failed to get on terms with. We were told that it was no very exceptional thing to bring in a brace of whales after a day's hunt. One would have thought that the weight of the one carcase alongside would have proved a severe handicap in pursuit of another one, but apparently it did not.

I stood by the rail at our low stern, alongside which the weird head of the whale lolled and wobbled under water. His great fringed eyes, seen through the clear sea, seemed to blink at me in a benevolent and most un-fishlike way. Rolling now and then, and showing his under-parts, all covered with barnacles and sea-grasses, and striped with plank-like corrugations, his belly looked strangely like the bottom of some old wooden vessel long derelict. Into the huge mouth, whose lower jaw was swinging pendulous and part open, ten foot down, a motor-car might have been driven. The first impression received was one of immense age, the next, of benevolence. And indeed if the length of a whale's life is in proportion to that of his co-mammal, the elephant, he must be very long-lived.

So we turned towards Durban, and went below for our third meal from those hospitable seamen. Our hosts—for so in every way to us were the skipper, gunner, and mate—were simple kindly fellows, with the easy and good manners of perfectly well-bred people. And the crew gave us a similar impression. They formed between them a joint-stock company in the whaling business, and were longing to make enough money to get back to their native land. The question of offering any sort of tip or remuneration for an intensely interesting day, and three good meals, was mooted between my companion and myself, only to be dismissed instantly as quite unthinkable in such good company. My companion was a farmer, and myself a soldier. In the latter no interest whatever was evinced. But our hosts literally hung upon the words of the former. If we were interested in whales and whaling,

they were equally interested in farms and farming. Perhaps, like all sailors, they were intending to buy a farm and quit the sea. So when the farmer got back to his farm he sent them what they had mentioned as hard to come by, or too expensive, in Durban—namely, a large present of eggs.

We were back in Durban harbour an hour or so after dark, and came-to off the whaling jetty. Here, each awaiting her turn to get rid of the day's catch, lay the other whalers. A powerful arc-light lit up the water, and showed up the glistening monstrous shapes of the air-filled whales floating here, there, and everywhere. Each in turn was got to the foot of a wooden slip-way which ran from the water up to the tail-truck of several which had been backed ready to receive the whale. Up this ramp the great shapes slowly crept tail first, and tail first disappeared from our view into the end of the truck. The engine whistled, and then with a jolt and a rattle, away went the train to the flensing station beyond the hill, where the whales are cut up and their waste products—meat, bones, &c.—are used as fertilisers. All this we watched with interest, especially the handling of a great sperm whale. But when it came to our very own whale, him with whom all had been, as it were, on terms of a kind of intimacy, whom we had known while still in all the might of his natural shape, although it may not have been to us a very beautiful shape, then there came a feeling of pity. Slowly the glistening distended carcase was propelled to the slip-way, and the tackles were clapped on to the tail that, up to a few hours ago, and perhaps for a century or more, had threshed the seas and steered that huge hulk through how many thousand sea-miles! Out of life, out of shape, bloated and hideous, the thing that had been a whale crept up the slip-way, head down, tail up, and went its way to be disintegrated for the benefit of man. There was something scandalising and shocking about it.

THE STORY OF THE SIEGE OF SAMAWAH.

THERE was no sound of revelry in the small perimeter camp tucked away in a bend of the Euphrates, a mile above Samawah. The hot day had spent itself, and a group of four officers, having finished what they were pleased to call dinner —a meal of many things tinned, supplemented by a few local purchases of vegetable of an Eastern variety,—sat, as the poets say, wrapped in the glory of an Eastern night. Of a sudden there was a slight ruffle in the air—a hot wind from the desert appeared to quicken all to life. The group of officers stirred, and each went to "carry on." An Indian officer reported that his men were ready to march to their piquet posts, which had been prepared as a result of the rebellious activities of Sheikh X. Events had moved quickly that day, so quickly that Captain C. remarked that Piccadilly was very far away. Captain C. was expecting leave to England.

At midnight the piquet commanders reported "All's well," but shortly afterwards heavy firing was heard in the direction of Barbooti Bridge, two miles north of the camp. Information was received that 600 Arabs had made a surprise attack against the small piquet, and by weight of numbers, after a short but severe fight, overwhelmed the defenders. A few words of command, a rattle of rifle-bolts and bayonets being fixed, and a company marched out to clear the situation. With the first streak of dawn this company, gallantly led by Captain C., drove the Arabs from the position which they had captured, many preferring death by drowning rather than face the cold steel. With their last effort the men of the small piquet rendered their weapons useless ere they fell into the hands of the enemy. "Aut vincere aut mori." The few who had escaped death lay severely wounded. Thus ended the first engagement of what was to prove a war of no small magnitude with a merciless enemy, who could call many thousands to his standard, and had the strongest of allies—the desert.

In a few hours every mud hut, every tent, and every minaret was being emptied of *matériel* for war against the Infidel. Piquets which appeared to be of insufficient strength to withstand a heavy attack were withdrawn.

The Barbooti bridgehead piquet busied themselves during the day in anticipation of further attacks, and a surprise awaited the Arabs at night. Under cover of darkness a considerable number lay concealed behind camel-thorn bushes. The experienced

eyes of an Indian officer—young, though old in wars—had watched those bushes of camel-thorn, and a murderous fire was poured into the attackers. No further attempt was made to capture the position.

For a time the main efforts of the tribesmen were directed against Rumaitha and the forces which attempted its relief. Its garrison had only two days' rations, and was obliged to rely on raids. Under cover of aerial bombardments, storm parties rushed forward to the surrounding buildings, scattering bombs round suspicious corners, and overcoming all resistance by the use of the bayonet, while coolies picked up anything eatable and rushed back with it. I hope that a better pen than mine will some day give a record of the gallant defence made by the brave defenders of the Rumaitha post, for the stand will rank second to none. Their *moral*, severely tested by disease, hunger, and thirst, and the persistent attacks of an enemy many times their number, was subjected to a still greater strain, for one day they heard the guns of a relief column, only to find next morning the sounds growing fainter and fainter. The column had done its best, but it was too small in number; and if the men of the Rumaitha garrison did not accompany it, honour certainly did.

After this failure the Commandant of Samawah strained every means to afford some relief to the besieged. Unable to reach the garrison, this took the form of attracting the enemy's attention from Rumaitha, which, after a stand of twenty-one days, was relieved by a large column operating from the north, and the garrison withdrew with that force.

It was to be expected that the Arabs would turn their attention to the next isolated post, and Samawah prepared for events. In order to stiffen the defences and rid the enemy of a base from which he could operate, it was decided to demolish three villages which were situated some three miles from the main position, and which had harboured the tribesmen who attacked the Barbooti Bridge piquet. Before dawn two hundred rifles from the main camp and one hundred from the station position moved out, and a defence vessel was moored in a convenient position to co-operate with the fire of the gun of the armoured train which was to be responsible for the artillery support. With the first light of dawn the signal for the attack was given. The Mahrattas advanced through the villages, leaving a trail of smoke behind them. Except for sniping, which was particularly heavy on the flanks, the Arabs offered little resistance, and the work of destruction was undisturbed. They had left their villages before the attack was launched, and had concentrated at a fa-

vourable distance, waiting for the withdrawal. In the meantime they endeavoured to cut off the isolated advanced flank. Considerable rifle-fire could be heard from that direction, but except for a mule which was calmly grazing on camel-thorn, nothing could be seen of friend or foe. It was not until the attacking troops had advanced within three hundred yards of the position held by the advanced flank that the real situation was known. The enemy, strong in number, had succeeded in surrounding the flanks of the small party, and had all but completed the ring. The Arabs were wise and did not wait for the steel and bomb.

The withdrawal of the whole line commenced with the liberation of the advanced flank, which was according to the plans of the commander. It was a difficult operation. A withdrawal is a *point d'appui* for the enemy in savage warfare, and only the steadiness and alert initiative of the retiring troops will save them. Each thin khaki line rose in its turn, and withdrew with a quick but steady tread to its next position, each movement being signalled by a heavy roll of musketry. The tribesmen raised their usual cries of victory, and calling on Allah to witness their deeds, rushed blindly forward to fall before the storm of bullets from the retiring troops. Suddenly a column of dust was observed to rise on the flank, and hundreds of robed figures on horseback charged, heralding their approach with a rattle of shot from the saddle and a tremendous shout. Not a quiver went through the khaki line. Each man moved as if on parade. No need to question the returned warriors regarding the result. A smile of victory covered every countenance.

The camps became a maze of trenches and bastions. Horses and mules were no longer able to enjoy their usual liberty and clean standings, but were confined in large trenches. The enemy, although not in force, showed considerable activity in sniping. The portable wireless which had been erected delivered news of the outer world, which news was everything but encouraging. Under cover of darkness the enemy occupied points of vantage, "strafed," and disappeared before dawn. The night prowlers became more adventurous, and it was necessary to limit their wanderings. One night they advanced within a very short distance of the defences, and temporarily occupied some mud buildings, the demolition of which time had not permitted. Bomb-traps were laid, and many a brick hid a sure death-dealing weapon at the slightest touch, and the opening of a door meant a sudden journey to the unknown. The placing of these bomb-traps caused much excitement and amusement, and during the following nights

many explosions were heard; but whether a wild dog, a jackal, or a human prowler fell victim, no proof could be obtained. However, the night prowlers became discouraged by the many explosions, and limited their wanderings.

The daily runs of the armoured train to a point twenty miles south, where it was met by another train of its kind, continued to bring in supplies. Every trip meant an engagement with the enemy, who made nightly attempts to destroy the track, and the stories of these little fights as told by the men who manned the train would make interesting reading. Efforts to obtain such defence weapons as mortars having failed, the next best thing was a new-pattern long-range rifle-bomb. The new weapon arrived by the last supply to be brought by the armoured train, for the next trip made resulted in obtaining no communication with the train which operated from the south, the base for which was Kidr, where an encampment of some 200 rifles helped to form the defence of the line of communication, which measured several hundred miles. Kidr had been attacked by a large force of the enemy, and although the attack had been repulsed the garrison had been ordered to evacuate their position the following day. The armoured trains conveying the garrison to a stronger station of defence had collided; and while the majority of the men had been able to withdraw in another train, a number had been killed, and much ammunition and a twelve-pounder gun lay as loot for the Arabs.

It was unfortunate for the Samawah garrison that at this time the defence vessel *Greenfly* ran aground while patrolling the river between Samawah and Kidr.

Large numbers of armed Arabs were observed from the look-out tower of the main camp to be entering Samawah town from all directions. The position which offered the first obstacle was the station camp, situated a mile from the main camp, and facing one wall of the city. Well fortified, and held by a hundred of the Napier Rifles, it was now considerably reinforced by the armoured train, manned by fifty rifles of the —— Lancers. Strong barbed-wire entanglements surrounded the camp and the train, and other forms of defence were not lacking. There was a quorum of British officers—Captain R. of the —— Lancers, who had full command of the post; Lieut. F. of the Napier Rifles; the gunner officer; and Captain M., the M.O. All were full of confidence, but little did they know how great the trial would be.

It was evening of a hot September day when the tribesmen hoisted their banners as the signal for battle, and all camps were engaged before dawn. The scene on the Euphrates that

night must have caused much excitement, and offered little encouragement to the enemy. Columns of smoke were to be seen as two defence vessels, a steamer and barges, ploughed their way towards Samawah, carrying ammunition and food and a reinforcement of fifty men and three British officers to the besieged garrison. The story of the adventures of that flotilla, which had sailed some hundred miles along a dangerous winding river, greeted with a murderous fire at every bend, would make interesting reading, sad though some of it would be. The flotilla had lost one steamer, which caught fire and perished with all its crew; and a few miles from its destination, and within sight of Samawah, a barge loaded with foodstuffs was dragged from its tug by the shallow bank, and fell into the hands of the enemy. The casualties which the flotilla had suffered and the bullet-spattered decks of all the boats were evidence of the difficult and brave task that had been accomplished.

The enemy pressed many attacks against the station camp, communication with which was now limited to lamp and helio. All these attacks having been beaten off with severe losses, the tribesmen—thousands in number—commenced digging positions round the camp, and strongly entrenched themselves at every corner. Fresh banners were raised daily, which showed that more sheikhs had brought their tribes to hasten the victory and share the loot which they boasted would soon fall into their hands. The personal servant (a negro Arab) of Captain R., the commander of the station post, crept outside the defences at night and collected intelligence of the enemy intentions. Subsequent events proved how false this intelligence was.

An aeroplane arrived, and began to "plough the fields and scatter." The tribesmen were not slow to recognise the terror from on high, and concentrated their rifle-fire at the new target. Each sudden swoop made by the 'plane was followed by loud explosions of bursting bombs and the rattle of Lewis-gun fire. The men of the post joined in the fight, for the Arabs in their excitement gave less consideration to cover. It did not last more than fifteen minutes. However, during its short stay the 'plane had given ample demonstration of its power.

Our sniping posts in the main camp were now fully manned, and many an Arab fell victim to the deadly shot which came from unexpected directions. The palm grove on the opposite bank of the river must have been a "Ploegstreete Wood" for them. They soon found their lairs unsafe, and deserted the bush and palm-trees for more substantial cover. One Arab sharpshooter, who occupied a mud building on the opposite bank of the river 200 yards from the

perimeter, became known as "Jacky I climb on one step." He made several loopholes as a disguise to his work, for he never used them, but would suddenly jump above his mud wall, fire, and disappear. All efforts to bag "Jacky" failed. He did not do much harm, as he made his appearance so short that he prevented himself from taking careful aim. This precaution for his personal safety probably makes "Jacky" a live boy to-day.

The attacks on the station post were resumed and continued, and the thud, thud of bursting grenades told of the close proximity of the enemy to the defences. A lucky shot from a tribesman pierced the tank which contained the water supply, and this rendered the position untenable. That the withdrawal would be a difficult operation was obvious to all. Every wounded man capable of pulling a trigger was brought out from the hospital to man the main defences.

Two hundred Mahrattas made their way along the communication trenches and concentrated in a cluster of palm-trees, the jumping-off place for the attack which was to be directed against the enemy's position on the general line of withdrawal, to force open the ring which had closed round the station camp. A number of aeroplanes were to arrive and bomb the enemy during the withdrawal. The approach of the 'planes was to be signalled by the guns of the defence vessels, which were to concentrate their fire on particular targets registered the previous day. The guns of the defence vessels opened fire, and the Mahrattas advanced. They took the enemy completely by surprise, and the positions were occupied without serious opposition. The 'planes swooped down, shedding bombs and Lewis-gun fire. Columns of smoke and flame rose high from the station camp as the occupants destroyed the *matériel*. The main body of the troops from the station camp withdrew and passed through the covering line of Mahrattas to the point of rendezvous, the supply camp, which formed a triangle defence to the main Samawah position. The aeroplanes departed, and with eagerness the covering troops waited for the advance of the armoured train, which was manned by fifty rifles of the —— Lancers, the wounded men of the station camp, such munitions as could not be destroyed or abandoned to the enemy, and a twelve-pounder gun. The plan of the station-camp commander included the armoured train as a rearguard; and as the railway had not been destroyed for some distance, it was to convey the wounded and munitions to a point nearer the rendezvous where the opposition of the enemy would be lessened by the better tactical advantages such a position would offer. The engine was then to be set in reverse, and the empty train would travel away

from the vicinity of the main Samawah camp, and would not menace the position by being occupied by the enemy at a point of advantage to them.

A few moments passed and the train commenced to move, but, alas! it moved outside its defence of barbed-wire entanglements and suddenly stopped. The gallant commander, Captain R., and the medical officer, Captain M., who had remained with the train, realising that their only hope lay in getting the men to the covering troops, went to each truck and gave the necessary orders. It was at this moment that hell broke forth with all its fury, such as it is impossible for any pen to describe. Five thousand tribesmen, no longer menaced by the presence of aeroplanes, dashed from their concealed positions behind the city walls. Every rifle and Lewis gun of the covering troops poured a deadly fire into the frenzied mass, but the great slaughter only appeared to quicken the efforts of the tribesmen, who rushed onward heedless of their dead and wounded, on whom they trampled. They reached the train in a few moments, for it was only two hundred yards. So sudden and so tremendous was the impact that but little resistance could be made. A British gunner, having thrown a number of rupee notes to the onrushing fanatics, caused them for a moment to stay their spears in order to collect the money. He waited until the mob which confronted him were intent on gathering the rupee notes, and lifting his hand as if to scatter more money he hurled a bomb, then another bomb, into the wave which was surging around him. His bombs thrown, he faced a braver death, and pulled a trigger close to his brain. Man dies, but glory lives!

Only a few men from the train reached the Mahratta line; the remainder were in a few seconds despatched by the foe. Onwards the hordes rushed to the Mahrattas, who had continuously poured a deadly fire into them. At that moment another wave of approximately five hundred from the cover of the palm grove charged for the left. Quick and deadly was the fire from front and flank. The men in the piquets of the main position had observed the great peril which threatened the covering troops and developed the flanking fire. The accurate and combined fire saved the left flank, but the right of the line was now heavily engaged and in serious danger of being cut off. The tribesmen advanced with alarming rapidity. All the Samawah townsmen were in the conflict, and the majority, unable to boast of a rifle, had armed themselves with such crude implements of war as hatchets, spears, and sharpened iron bars. Nor were they lacking in the use of their weapons. A white-robed horde flaunting many banners would

suddenly rush forward to the attack, but so deadly was the fire that the banners would suddenly disappear to the ground, to be raised again by the next storming party. So numerous were the tribesmen that their attacks gathered a momentum which enabled them to reach within a hundred yards.

The men of the Napier Rifles, who, under the command of Lieut. F., had at the commencement of the operation stormed the near enemy strong point, which commanded the position near the ill-fated train, now joined the covering troops, having fought their way through hundreds of enemy spearmen who for a time completely surrounded them. Very few can boast of an experience such as Lieut. F. had that day. The gallant defenders of the train being no more, the hardly-pressed covering troops commenced to withdraw. This withdrawal was one of exceptional difficulty, for the enemy outnumbered the troops by a ratio of twenty to one, and held the commanding positions from which they could easily develop an enveloping movement. The tribesmen heavily attacked the right flank, which was now engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict. The situation was serious, for if the enemy succeeded in pinning down the right flank — and with the numbers at his disposal such an operation could be easily accomplished — the covering troops would find themselves surrounded by a ring so strong that it would be impossible for them to force their release. Alert to the danger, an Indian officer (Jemdr. Sarjerao Supekar), who had command of two platoons which formed an immediate support to the right flank, ordered his men to charge through the front line and meet the enemy with bomb and bayonet and throw off the weight of the encircling movement. The tribesmen stood for the charge. The men from the Konkan and the Dekkan —brave men of a brave race —proved true to their lineage and worthy of their ancestors. The courage of these two platoons undoubtedly prevented a disaster of such magnitude that it would have seriously affected the whole of the operations from the extreme north to the extreme south of the country. The enemy, unable to break the line or encircle it, harassed it with a murderous fire.

Many gallant deeds undoubtedly passed unnoticed during this severe battle, but there was one so conspicuous that many were witnesses to it. During the retirement of the two platoons after their advance which liberated the right flank, a dead sepoy lay, the victim of an enemy spear-thrust. The body was some distance from the Mahratta line, and less than 100 yards from the advancing tribesmen. Naik Aba Kadam, bomb in hand, rushed forward alone. He threw his dead comrade over his shoulder, picked up

his comrade's rifle, and retraced his steps to his platoon. For a moment the advancing Arabs appeared mesmerised. Unable to advance farther owing to the covering fire with which the platoons were now assisting the Naik, they concentrated a heavy fire upon him. Naik Aba Kadam, though an easy target, was spared to reap the reward of his gallantry, and is now wearing the I.D.S.M.

The covering troops, though harassed by a heavy rifle-fire, continued their withdrawal in good order. In conjunction with the withdrawal of the station-camp garrison, the withdrawal of the Barbooti Bridge piquet was carried out. All defence material was salved, and the piquet withdrew without serious opposition.

The losses suffered by the garrison were heavy. Two British officers and fifty men had fallen with the loss of the train, and in addition there were the casualties of the covering troops. An enormous amount of ammunition and bombs, also a twelve-pounder gun, had fallen into the hands of the enemy. The troops had suffered no defeat, for the tribesmen's casualties were 1500 wounded and killed—a total six times the number of troops engaged in the day's fighting. Indeed it was a victory, but victory brings little rejoicing when it is bought by the loss of such brave men as fell that day.

The troops were reorganised, as only two positions—the main camp and the supply camp—now formed the defence. Ammunition was carefully distributed, and the low stock caused much anxiety.

The night after the heavy fighting was quiet except for sniping. The enemy were performing the burial rites over their dead, and busy with the distribution of the loot. Dawn brought an unpleasant surprise. The Arabs, assisted by Turkish gunners, shelled the supply camp with the gun which they had captured on the armoured train. No casualties resulted. The enemy now boasted of two guns, but it was believed that only one would be of any use to them, as the gun which had fallen into their hands at Kidr had been dismantled from its carriage, and was being carried round the tribes as a trophy of war. Those conversant with the particular piece of ordnance emphatically stated that all the sheikhs and their men, with all the help of Allah, would not be able to make the gun fire again.

Two aeroplanes arrived and hovered over the camp. Suddenly they changed their direction and swooped down. Columns of dust and smoke rose high around the gun which had spoken so loudly a few hours previous. No gun-fire greeted the night, and it was thought that the bombs had found a billet. Subsequent events proved otherwise. During the night the Arabs erected a number of sandbag emplace-

ments, increased the number of sniping posts, and commenced entrenchments along the southern face of the camp. "Jacky I climb on one step" was particularly active, and his fire was the signal which opened at regular intervals a spasm of hate.

The sheikh, whose power extended over many hundreds of miles of the great barren land, and whose word was law to 10,000 followers of the Prophet, was actually residing in Samawah town. Secret intelligence gave the exact position of his temporary residence, and a wireless message sent the news to Baghdad, with the hope that it would receive due attention from on high at the earliest possible moment.

The tactical position was such that the most favourable point for the enemy to launch his attack was the southern perimeter of the main camp. Palm-trees flanked this face, and were within 200 yards of the wire entanglements, thus affording the enemy cover for concentration, and a jumping-off place for an assault on a considerable scale. One evening the heavy sniping fire decreased, but considerable activity was observed in the palm grove, and at midnight the Arabs were in force. The hours gradually passed away until midnight, when explosions occurred near the wire of the southern trenches. The Arabs had thrown a number of hand-bombs. These probably had been collected from the armoured train. Lewis-gun fire searched the palm grove, and a mighty yell rent the air. Very lights shot upwards and opened into a bright glare. Two hundred Arabs charged from the palm grove, cheered on by thousands who had collected there. The onrush was met by a murderous fire from the Mahratta rifles, before which the white-robed mass thinned, spread itself, and receded into the darkness. Not one of the mad horde reached the wire entanglements.

The yells of the fanatics had been deadened by the roar of musketry. As this ceased they grew louder and louder, and another rush was made towards the position. The Mahratta weapons spoke as before, and the assault withered as quickly as it materialised. The majority of the Arabs collected in the palm grove apparently were content to howl-on the more adventurous spirits, unwilling to charge with them and yet ready to bounce forward at the first signs of success. No further attacks were launched, and at dawn the heavy fire subsided into the usual sniping. As all the men of the main camp had been engaged, the only relief which could be effected was the changing over of posts—the men from the less active posts relieving those who had faced the harder trials of the night. Stock was taken of the ammunition. The expenditure had been so heavy, and the possibilities of early

relief of the garrison were so remote, that special orders limiting the expenditure of ammunition and bombs were issued. The stock of supplies was no better than the stock of munitions, and every officer and man was immediately placed on half rations. The danger within equalled the danger from without.

The hot day spent itself. The sniping gradually died down, and for hours there was complete silence, suddenly broken by the enemy throwing bombs towards the southern defences. Several hundred Arabs rushed forward from the palm grove, and the Mahrattas opened fire. The usual "hate" followed the failure of the attackers. The bombs which the Arabs had used were of a small pattern, and very local in effect. Their supply of Mills bombs was far from exhausted, and the absence of them and the introduction of the small bomb gave rise to much speculation. It was afterwards discovered that the intricate mechanism of No. 5 hand-grenade — the abbreviated name is Mills bomb— had been too much for the tribesmen, and the whole of their stock was consigned to the river. Some youthful Arabs, boasting of their knowledge of the mysteries of the bomb, had left undone the things which they ought to have done, and the boastful youths were soon waiting to be claimed in the wonderful paradise that is reserved for all true believers of the Prophet.

Two aeroplanes arrived from Baghdad. Each aeroplane in turn swooped down to a particular target. Houses began to disappear. The object of the bombardment was the destruction of the "Big Noise," the owner of the large red silk banner, who controlled the actions of so many thousands of tribesmen. The number of rifles which shot at the aeroplanes told of the great strength of the enemy. The aeroplanes, having dropped all their bombs and fired all their ammunition, glided over the Samawah garrison, dropped a "cheerio" message, and flew homewards.

The man in the look-out tower, who was connected by a field-telephone to headquarters, reported that a large body of Arabs had entered Samawah, each Arab having in his possession a bundle of reeds. Tales of Arabs filling their *abbas* with reeds as a means of mounting barbed-wire entanglements—the filled *abbas* neutralising the effects of the pricks—had many times been heard. The news was disquieting, for the enemy could by weight of numbers alone carry the Samawah defences. The last rays of light were fast fading into darkness when a tremendous burst of fire spread over the main camp. The Arabs were in considerable strength at all points, while in the palm grove several hundreds were preparing for an assault. A number of small

bombs were thrown by them as the signal for their attack. A mass of white-robed men rushed from the cover of the palm grove, while their fellows poured a heavy fire from the flanks, giving the attackers a good support. The tribesmen reached the barrier of fire and then rushed back to cover. During that shock attack the slightest quiver in the line would have meant defeat, but the Mahrattas remained as cool and their fire as steady and deliberate as if they were engaged in a range musketry practice. Several other attacks were made during the night, but they lacked spirit, and were easily broken up by a few rifle grenades. The heavy fire continued until dawn, when the enemy ended his fierce "hate" by shelling the supply camp. As on previous occasions, the shelling resulted in no casualties, and very little damage. Sniping continued during the day, and was followed by spasmodical bombing of the southern defences of the main camp during the night. This form of warfare continued during many days and nights.

An Armenian, who for several months had acted as a canteen man for the garrison, and had erected a small straw hut inside the defences, volunteered to proceed through the defences to Samawah city and obtain information of the enemy. He had already made several trips to the Samawah bazaar; but the man of the East has a vivid imagination, and the information collected, though of a startling nature, was of little assistance to the Commandant. However, all admired the Armenian for the risk he ran. Garbed in Arab attire, he sauntered to the coffee-stalls in the bazaar, when three tribesmen pricked his attention with the point of their daggers. Probably a Jew from whom he had in times of peace made purchases for his canteen betrayed him to the tribesmen. Annas were scarce in those days. The Armenian was hurried before the owner of the large red banner. A rope was placed round his throat, and he was led to the nearest palm-tree, after having been dragged through the hordes of infuriated tribesmen.

Five aeroplanes paid another visit and heavily bombed the enemy's positions. The usual rifle-fire was at first directed against the aeroplanes, and then puffs of smoke surrounded them. The Turks and Arabs were firing shells at the aeroplanes, and these shells were being fired from a gun which was not the gun which had been in action against the supply camp. If this was not a surprise for the airmen, it certainly formed a surprise for the troops of the garrison. The Turks had made a base for their second gun, and had provided all the missing parts. How they accomplished this will never be discovered, but their effort was no small affair. Two days later, the newly-

erected gun pounded away at the main Samawah position. The defence vessels endeavoured to engage the guns, but the enemy had them well protected, and judging from the results of the first two shells fired, it would have required a small bombardment to destroy them. Such an expenditure of shells could not be spared.

A crowd of Arabs were observed near the river bank. Numerous banners of many colours were being waved. Probably this was a gathering of elders of tribes. Although the shortage of ammunition caused many a target to be left alone, permission to engage this one was readily given. A machine-gun was hauled from the defence vessel, placed in the most suitable redoubt in the main camp, and a special allowance of ammunition allotted. The machine-gunner, certain of his target, pressed the trigger, and a storm of bullets rained on the gathering. It is known that the Arabs are light of foot. They certainly proved it on this occasion.

So the days passed, each day bringing fresh fears and little hope, and the small hospital gradually filling with the wounded. The river, which flanked the east face of the main Samawah position, forming the natural obstacle to that face, fell several inches, leaving a piece of dead ground. Under cover of this a number of Arabs crept forward and fastened a long steel-wire cable to the barbed-wire entanglement which ran into the river. They then returned to their trenches and pulled the cable, which dragged several yards of barbed wire off the main post of resistance. At dawn the cable was still attached to the entanglement, which was continuous. Had the Arabs been more energetic they could have removed the whole of the line of entanglements by this means. Deadly sniping prevented any attempt being made to rush and cut the cable. Sapping was immediately commenced towards the outer obstacle, and did not cease in spite of the tremendous amount of fire which the enemy trained on the workers. Owing to the small number of men who could work at it, sunset found the sap only half completed. At this time the firing from the enemy suddenly ceased, and the absence of the din of battle, which had been continuous for forty days and nights, was uncanny.

A large white flag being waved from side to side was observed near the river bank. It was obviously a flag of truce, and orders were given to allow the bearer to approach. On reaching the defences, he was blindfolded and led to the headquarter dug-out. The bearer of the flag of truce was Sheikh Hussan Agha, who, as a result of having saved the life of a British officer at the commencement of the war, had nearly forfeited his life. As part atonement for his deed

he was obliged to act as emissary. Sheikh Sayed Hadi —the Big Noise—demanded the surrender of the garrison, using the threat that he had 20,000 rifles, many machine-guns and artillery, and promised that each man of the garrison should keep his rifle and be given a safe-conduct to the nearest British force. Of the shortage of food and ammunition which faced the defenders, Sheikh Sayed Hadi pretended to have full knowledge. But the knowledge of the defenders "larai ki josh" had not entered his troubled mind. Troubled his mind must have been to have sent a messenger on such a useless errand, for the colossal losses which the tribesmen had suffered should have warned him that his attempts to induce the garrison to surrender were foredoomed to failure. Sheikh Hussan Agha, the bearer of the flag of truce, delivered the message of the rebel leader without showing any signs of enthusiasm, for he knew more of the spirit of the British than any other Arab; nor did he enforce the arguments of the rebels with a view of obtaining a reply suitable to their wishes. The answer of the Commandant was verbal, and was given in a few words which were not intended to be interpreted, and which the reader must guess. Officially no reply was sent to the rebel leader. Immediately after the return of Sheikh Hussan Agha rapid fire commenced. His story had been told.

The gap in the wire was still unrepaired, the uncompleted sap formed no reliable obstacle, and several hundreds of the enemy were within 300 yards of it. The Mahratta rifles never opened with more deadly effect, but the more desperate diehards of the tribesmen collected and charged towards the defences, howling to their god and their comrades to witness their bravery, and raising a louder yell to strike fear into the hearts of the defenders. The yells were soon drowned in the rattle of musketry and the roar of exploding bombs. The mad wave broke before the barrier of fire, and quickly faded into the darkness and cover of the palm-trees. Several attacks developed during the night, but they were made on a small scale and lacked the determination which had marked the first.

Work on the sap was continued in spite of the special precautions which the enemy took to prevent it. Barbed wire was collected from the defences which had not been so heavily attacked, and a portable wire obstacle, known as "knife-rest," was made to be placed in the gap as soon as the sap had been sufficiently advanced. During the night several sepoys crept towards the wire, but the moonlight, which we had reason to praise, as it minimised the expenditure of Very lights, the supply of which was nearly exhausted, proved a hindrance, and the Arabs showed their dislike by

spasms of rapid fire at the sap-head. The sepoys, unable to make any headway, returned to the trenches. Between the change of night to day a havildar managed to reach the wire. Unable to cut the cable which had been attached to the entanglement, he cut the entanglement from the cable. There was now no fear of the whole line of wire being pulled away, but the gap still remained and had to be filled. The enemy sniping gradually decreased as the day advanced, and in the haze of twilight four young sepoys from the Dekkan rushed to the wire which had been released from the cable, and hurled it back to its original position. Crack, crack went several enemy rifles, but the fire was too late, for the four men were back in the trench. This particular corner of the defences afterwards attracted much of the Arabs' attention, but their sniping did not prevent the portable obstacle being placed and staked into position during the night. The anxious eyes of the defenders no longer turned to the spot.

The heavy fighting of the previous days had seriously reduced the stock of ammunition, and greater precautions had to be taken. The stock of Very lights—a most essential weapon for the defenders—was so low that a wireless message was sent asking for a supply to be dropped from aeroplanes. The troops of the garrison had received no meat for a considerable period. Even dried dates were issued with a parsimonious hand. The fighting had taken its toll, and the continuous strain and lack of sleep was telling its awful tale, but the "do-or-die" spirit was to be found everywhere. The wounded grinned at their awful gashes, and pleaded with the doctor to let them rejoin their comrades in the battlements ere the first bandage had been adjusted. Two aeroplanes arrived and dropped parcels inside the perimeter. Eager fingers opened them, and counted out the contents. Two hundred rounds of Very lights and a message of cheer and admiration from the outside world.

The small wireless installation continued to collect official and much unofficial news. The news it now delivered was not of an encouraging nature. A column certainly was being formed to effect the relief of the besieged garrison, but several days would elapse before it could start. The march was over sixty miles, and it would probably have to fight many a stiff battle in a scorching temperature, making the progress very slow. The defence vessel was still aground at Kidr, and was surrounded by tribesmen, who were making continuous attempts to capture it. It was stated that the crew were being fed by aeroplanes dropping food on the boat, but so difficult was the task for the

airmen that much had fallen into the hands of the Arabs. One aeroplane made a special effort, but the risk had resulted in the engine being pierced by the fire of the tribesmen, and the 'plane falling into the river. How long the crew of the defence vessel could hold out against such tremendous odds was a matter of great concern to the garrison of Samawah, who could offer no help.

The man in the look-out tower reported that large numbers of the enemy were to be seen leaving Samawah, and proceeding in a southerly direction. During four days 5000 Arabs left Samawah town, and marched to their new objective. The enemy attempted to disguise this movement by increased activity. This increased activity was opened by the Arabs setting fire to the Barbooti Bridge. Flames rose high from the burning piles. A defence vessel was hurriedly steamed to the bridge, and on its arrival the work of destruction was stopped. Following the attempt to destroy the Barbooti Bridge, the tribesmen made a surprise attack on the southern face of the main camp. The attack was cleverly planned, and was not lacking in spirit, but it met the same end as all the previous attacks. Disappointed by their failure, the Arabs kept up a lively fire on the positions all through the night, and the next day their snipers paid less than their usual attention to cover. A sniper even more adventurous than his fellows reserved his fire for the wearer of the white shirt, and the Commandant of Samawah—the mainstay of the defence—nearly fell a victim.

To force a victory by continuous assaults had proved a costly failure, and now a new weapon of no mean strength was brought into action. Several Arabs capable of speaking fluent Hindustani shouted from the enemy trenches to the men to forsake the position and join their ranks. The British relief column, they said, had been defeated, those who had escaped the slaughter were in hurried retreat, and no force could possibly reach the besieged garrison. The small amount of food within the camp they knew could not last many days. To both Mohammedans and Hindus who joined their ranks, food, money, and land would be given. Allah would send to everlasting burning hell all within the defences who did not join them. To the Mohammedans they issued a special warning concerning their holy cause. The Mahrattas' rifles spelt the answer. Hunger, fatigue, and the great strain of many fights had not lessened the devotion of those fighting sons of India. Black they were, but white inside.

The next day the wireless delivered news of the position of the relief column, which was stated to be a considerable

force, accompanied by cavalry and a whole brigade of artillery, commanded by a General whose name was not unknown to the Arabs. The tribes so far had not seriously opposed the column, much to the disappointment of the force, who, confident of victory, wanted battle, and as the British soldier says, "a chance to kill the ——." They had limited their opposition to attacks on the flanks of the force, making full use of the great natural obstacle, which they placed in front of them when any serious danger from the column threatened. The column was still several days' march from Samawah, and it was to be expected that the Arabs would soon make a strong stand against it. It was also to be expected that with the advance of the relief column still further and stronger efforts would be made against the Samawah garrison.

While the news of the advance was being discussed by the cheery voices of the defenders, another wireless was received which was so serious in character that the joys of the first message were lost in the great danger which threatened. The defence ship *Greenfly* had at last fallen into the hands of the enemy. The vessel was armed with two guns, many machine-guns and Lewis guns, with a plentiful supply of high-explosive shells and small-arm ammunition. It was not known whether the guns had been destroyed. Two days would afford the tribesmen ample time to bring their new weapons into action against the garrison, and with such an addition of ordnance they could create a barrage that would pound the defences of Samawah to dust. Even if the guns of the defence vessel had been destroyed, the large store of high-explosive shells could feed the guns which the enemy already had in action. If the Arabs made many more attacks, the besieged would soon find their bayonets the only means of defence. The situation was more serious than at any other period. Many days afterwards it was discovered that the gunners of the captured vessel died facing fearful odds, and true to the traditions of the Royal Regiment, had destroyed their guns at the moment of capture.

As the blazing sun gradually faded beyond the horizon, a slight wind fanned the scorching wilderness, and carried the faint sound of distant gun-fire to the eager ears of the defenders. Was it gun-fire, or was it the imagination of strained nerves? Anxious ears were strained to catch the sound which to them meant so much. The British officers of the main camp had collected for their scanty evening meal. Glasses clinked together to the success of the relief column. True, the glasses contained only muddy water, but the toast was from the heart.

The relief column was only

twenty miles from the hard-pressed garrison. Two days' march and the siege, with all its horrors, would be over. The stock of ammunition was again carefully counted. Precaution still had to be taken for unforeseen events. However, the nightly allowance was increased. The tribesmen, alarmed by the rapid advance of the column, intended to make a final attempt to capture the Samawah positions. Many lamps hung above the enemy trenches along the southern edge of the defences, and the enemy camp-fires were so numerous that the palm grove was a blaze of light showing numerous banners. Sniping increased as the tribesmen collected in their trenches ready to make the assault. The yells from the palm grove rose louder and louder, and the large banners from the camp-fires were carried into the front trenches, from which the babble of voices rose higher and higher. The usual practice of the defenders was to reserve their fire until the enemy were within a few yards of the obstacles. This method was now departed from. Two long-range bombs were taken into the foremost sap, and four Lewis guns were trained on the given target ready to fire at the signal. A large red banner, surrounded by many lights, was being paraded through the enemy trenches. The signal was given, and two long-range bombs descended on the banner. There was a big flash and a roar, and four Lewis guns sent out their drums of fire. The lights disappeared, and the banner no longer waved triumphantly over the parapet. The yells of the tribesmen changed into squeals and moans. The enemy had been surprised. The Arabs on the opposite bank of the river, unable, owing to the absence of lights, to give fire-support to the storm troops, turned their fire to other positions; and the rifle reports, re-echoing over the river, made such a noise that sleep was impossible for any one during the night.

With dawn the roar of the guns of the advancing column grew louder and louder, and was mingled with the sound of bursting bombs from the air. The wireless operators were very busy during the day receiving messages from the General commanding the column. It appeared that the tribesmen were preparing to make a determined stand in the positions they had made three miles south of Samawah city. The enemy trenches were flanked by the river, and extended a number of miles to a system of old irrigation channels, which had been strongly fortified. The enemy strength was estimated to be between 8000 and 9000 rifles. Another night passed. The roar of cannon filled the air as the first streak of light widened in the horizon, and as the great monarch of the desert rose its light was shaded by the smoke of exploding shells

and clouds of dust from crumbling walls. In order to render as much help as the garrison could afford, a defence vessel from the supply camp steamed down-stream towards the city to pound at the enemy rear positions, and destroy the many sniping-posts. Owing to the dangerous state of the river, it was obliged to be navigated near the banks. Reaching the first enemy position, the guns opened fire. The shelling, however, did not deter the snipers, who made the vessel their special target. It steamed round the bend of the river until alongside the main Samawah position. Here the rudder became damaged by rifle-fire, and the vessel was carried by the current to a mud-bank. The enemy gun opened fire, and the shells, missing the boat, burst in the main camp. The ship was in extreme peril, but Captain S., the navigating officer, handled the situation with great skill. Pending the arrival of another boat from the supply camp, the crew spent their time in engaging the numerous enemy snipers. The vessel was eventually towed back to the supply camp. At noon six aeroplanes joined in the battle, raining bombs and Lewis-gun fire over Samawah town. The guns opened their drum-fire on the enemy's positions, and the troops of the relief column advanced to the attack. The strong enemy line broke before the lines of steel. The tribesmen fled in all directions, some making for boats, others fleeing for the great desert. Those who sought to cross the river found the knives of the Gurkhas blocking their way, and the yellow waters became tinged with crimson. The besieged men of the garrison watched the scene from their battlements. Thousands of robed figures spread over the great plain, hurrying to the setting of the sun, and with the fading light the hopes of the thousands of fanatics passed away.

So ended the great siege. It had lasted over two months. The garrison had been reduced considerably. The loss of the besiegers cannot be precisely stated, but many hundreds had been carried away to the sunless homes of the dead. The recollection of past dangers and privations, and the consciousness of having served so well, swelled the hearts of the troops with honest pride. That pride grew stronger when they received in the Order of the Day congratulations from the great General. *Laudari a viro laudato* is indeed praise.

THE COUNTLESS STONES.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE MACMUNN, K.C.B., K.C.S.I.

Into the sunset with Raleigh.

It has been said that the English scatter their dead over the world like old cigar-ends, and the alchemist who writes of the English epic wrote that of our wayside, world-strewn graves before the Great War. Before, that is to say, our people had out-ubiqu'd Darius the Achæmenian, or outmarched Alexander of Macedon, or tramped the Legions' road to Rimini. But whereas formerly only the widow and the orphan kept ken of the bed of the countless stones, the law of sacrifice and duty has now come to most.

The story of the unknown soldier has sent a deep wave of understanding through that curious yet simple-hearted people the British, and has touched the very *fount of pathos*, but the story had occurred before.

This is the story of another unknown soldier, told in somewhat flippant tones because of the flippancy of the diction rather than of the motive. The pathos of the story remains.

Twenty years ago — though the world will pay no heed to it at present — Britain, that country so well described as "in a sea a swan's nest," had two considerable wars on hand, after her wont. The larger one need not be referred to, save as a reading of the Riot Act in one of her nurseries; but the other will be remembered as the running amuck of the yellow man, for some psychological reason that we were too lazy to fathom. To that war came the policeman nations, and with them a thief or two. They say that a keeper and a poacher are but sib, and no doubt a policeman and a thief are the same. For instance, Hans Breitman on the Pei-Ho, with his jacket stuffed with loot, standing to attention and denying his acts, "*Nein! Herr Hauptman, Nein!*" would be a case in point.

The setting is as follows. Low down on the river by the flats that border the northern sea, the armies disembarked *en route* for Pekin, by lighter and barge and wherry, horses and guns and soldiers, and the embarkation officers sweating far into the night. China was throwing off a sickness, and the cure seemed worse than the disease; at any rate, so it seemed to the Royal Indian Marine, who had the dirty work to do for all the nations. For the benefit of those who do not know, it may be explained that the Royal Indian Marine do all the hard-work sea-service of the Government of India, and they are like the Royal Navy, only more so. If you

want to imagine them at their longshore duties, you must try and visualise what an army getting ashore at an open mud beach is like. The army from the Dardanelles knows something of it, except for the mud and a tidal river, thrown in to make it easier. A camel being landed in slings is not within the power of human imagination, and you must move in the astral plane if you would conjure the picture; but as a horse in a sling is to a bale of piece goods in oddity, so is a camel to a horse. The supercilious curl of the nostril has gone, terror spawned on imbecility has supervened. Yet the Indian Marine can and do land him safely, as at this juncture they were landing the contingents of the civilised world, with which the United States may be incorporated.

The mention of that world-power brings me to the point, the story of the unknown soldier of 1901, flippant in its diction, but full of the *lachrimæ rerum* to those whose minds dwell on the end of soldiers. The contingent of the United States had landed and gone to the front, full of zeal, rather short of what the Old World calls discipline, bursting with *camaraderie* for the Britisher, whose officers, for some peculiar and psychological reason, they elected to salute; very adverse to Dagoes and Dutchmen, into which categories they divided the rest of the armed world.

It was past high time on the beach, and embarkation staff, Marine officers, and conscientious searchers for missing stores had assembled in the shanty that served as a beach mess, for what in the sea-service is called "elevenses," feeling that they had deserved it. They probably had, for in addition to the day's work, some 500 mules had got loose in the mud, and everybody who had a right to be angry was saying so with some wealth of blasphemy, the which is an enigma.

Up to the mess sauntered a weird-looking gentleman with a wide hat and revolver on a waist-belt.

"Good morning, misters."

"Good morning; come and have a drink."

"I believe I will; but you will want to know who I am."

"Never mind that; have a drink. What is it to be?"

"Oh, just whisky."

"Whisky-and-soda?"

"No, just whisky — what more would a man drink?—just whisky with a chaser. But you will like to know who I am. I am commanding Uncle Sam's corps of corpse collectors . . . thank you."

"Corpse collectors!"

"Yep, corpse collectors. You perhaps don't realise that it is the inalienable right of every freeborn American citizen who loses his life for his country outside the precincts and boundaries of the United States to have his body duly delivered by Uncle Sam at his own doorstep. Yes, sir! . . . Thank you; no, I'll drink the chaser presently."

"Is your corps with you?"

"It is, Cap! and three hundred best zinc-lined maple-wood casketts."

"Casketts?"

"Yes, casketts. I believe you call them coffins; we call them casketts, and that is where I want your help. I understand that if you are ever in trouble, ask a British officer."

"Well, what is the trouble?"

"It is just those same casketts. I want to get them up-river. Uncle Sam's soldiers are gone ahead, and I don't want to be late with my assistance, and I gather I need only ask a British officer. Two of those barges of yours would take all my casketts P.D.Q. . . . Thank you, I will just another, a half this time."

"Have you got them on shore?"

"I have them right here on the mud close to that pier of yours there. Assistant Corpse Collector Martin P. Jones is sitting on them now. I can tell you, sir, that Uncle Sam is mighty particular about the re-mains of his freeborn soldiers, don't you forget it. And I think you gentlemen will agree with me that every American mother ought to be more than proud when she receives her son's corpse on her own doorstep in one of the United States best zinc-lined casketts."

Well, since *camaraderie* is *camaraderie*, and a helping hand is part of the game of war, though some Allies forget it, after supplying just one more whisky irrigator and administering the chaser, the whole of that party went to inspect the "casketts," and discuss the matter further with Assistant Corpse Collector Martin P. Jones, whose views were equally refreshing. It must be realised that I have but rendered the foregoing dialogue in the European form of the Anglo-Saxon language, and if the reader would get the glory in full, he must divest it of its distressing old-world English accent and use the proper Western intonation.

By 5 P.M. of that day, two hundred-ton barges, piled high with caskets, were duly lashed to a paddle-tug, and with the Chief Corpse Collector on the bridge and his men atop the said caskets, were chunking away into the setting sun.

With the disappearance of that strange steamer-load into the evening haze, the matter passed away as an incident of the day's work: caskets or no caskets, freeborn American citizens dead or alive, armies must be landed and fed, generals and their staffs must be pacified, and system and order maintained in a situation prone to run to disorder as the result of even half an hour's easy. The incident of the whisky and its chaser had already brought its nemesis in the shape of camels in the mud. Now, mules in the mud are one thing, camels in deep mud are another. To one it is pure joy, to the other slow death, or an opportunity for scoring you off by splitting in two on the middle seam. The supercilious

smile turns to a beseeching leer in the slime and ooze. The desert will tell you why the camel has that eternal supercilious smile, and the story is a strange one till one remembers that the desert is older even than China, and has forgotten more than China ever learnt. And the theory is this. There are certain things in this world that ordinary man is not allowed to know, but which most men know is denied them. First, there is the hundredth name of God. Islam, telling its beads and inscribing its monuments, can glibly tell ninety and nine—the "All-Merciful," "the All-Powerful," the "All-Seeing," and so forth. The hundredth is denied to ordinary mortals. Then, again, there is the Great Name of God. The great "I AM," that only the High Priest of the Jews dare mention, and that the multitude could never know, nor the few that know ever repeat. Thirdly, there is that mystery of mysteries, the missing word of the master-mason. They are all one and the same, and go to the very heart of things. The camel knows, says the desert, and is scornful of man, therefore and thereby. The tale is a pretty one, and since scornful cats eat horrid mice, there is joy to mankind to see a camel deep in the mud. The which, however, is but a side issue to this story.

As the days rolled by, the British established themselves along the road and rail and river to Pekin and "Blobs," little recking of the Baku to come, held high sway in a dozen languages and fifteen dialects in Tientsin. French and Russian, German and Jap, squabbled with each other, and caballed against the British; while the American just scratched himself, well aware that John Bull could hold his own without help. *Le Système "D"* carried on to perfection. *Débrouillez-vous* is a simple rule, and the tidy English had fits, and the Allies kept off Jock Reid's toes, having stepped there once or twice and caught a tartar. All of which was known to the Lost Legions of the Great War, but the knowledge is fast disappearing.

Be that as it may, it was interesting to note the Allies of those days, and their essential traits as developed in the Great War. The German, a cad always, especially in his cups, refusing to acknowledge the salutes of the Indian soldiers. The Frenchman, business-like and devoid of any sentiment where business, especially his own, was concerned. Especially good at making his troops comfortable, with the inevitable table, benches, and wine-barrel, that makes a French camp so homely at once. The American soldier, keen and alert and democratic, except when he met a British officer. The Britisher, careless yet competent, with whom every foreigner was glad to appear to have a personal acquaintance—which is another bit of the world's psychology,—always coming advantageously out of the world's muddles,

not because he is *perfide*—not a bit—but because he is so placed in the world that every event despite itself turns to his advantage. And over it all the imperturbable "Blobs," on whose breast the nations wept.

At the entrepôt of the nations at Tientsin, on his way for a little sight-seeing at the Imperial city, arrived one morning that important entity the Senior Marine Transport Officer, the same that had seen the caskets safely up-stream, and whose whisky had flowed before the chaser.

Strolling up and down the platform, whom should he see but his American friend the casket king, still picturesque and revolvered, on his way to the station bar.

"My, this is bully. Come right in, Cap, and have a straight whisky. I always heard that you had only to ask a British officer when in trouble, and but for you where would those freeborn American corpses have been!"

"Has all gone well with you, then, and have you finished the job?"

The fighting was over, and the Americans were coming down.

"Yes, I've finished the job, and a mighty queer one it's been. I was late with them casketts, thanks to our booreau at Washington, and it's no thanks to them I've got all the boys' corpses. One hundred and eighty-seven American citizens, sir, have given up their lives. This body-snatching is not all pleasure. No, sir! Looking for their graves, I've dug up dead donkeys and I've dug up dead Chinks, and I've dug my patent grave-indicator into every international grave in this here country."

It indeed sounded a pleasant occupation. The army will remember the days when the Boers buried rifles in graves, and before we dug we used an indicator, which told clearly whether the grave contained a corpse or no, but that failed when the Boers buried rifles under their own dead to baffle the searcher. The troubles of the corpse-collector were certainly not magnified, and the listener expressed his sympathy.

"Well, Uncle Sam should be more than grateful to you. Have you finished all your searching?"

"I have, Cap; at least, I have 187 full casketts, and I've found 186 freeborn American citizens. I was not going to open any more of those graves, not for the President himself."

"But you have got 187 full caskets."

"That is so, and those 187 casketts will be buried with all the pomp and circumstance, sir, that a grateful country can bestow on the bodies of its enlightened citizens, sir, who have given up their lives for the United States. By James, sir! and I reckon there's a British Red Marine among them, who will be durned surprised to find himself in Paradise alongside George Washington."

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

A "TREATY BETWEEN ENGLAND AND IRELAND"—THE FATE OF ULSTER—THE WAY OF THE BLACKMAILER—THE POLITICIAN'S CREED—FRANCE AND ENGLAND—LORD SALISBURY.

No sooner had the "treaty" been signed between Great Britain and Ireland than Mr Lloyd George and his colleagues cried aloud in praise and congratulation of themselves. They resembled the philanthropic lady in George Ade's fable, who used to go to a handball court every day and throw up bouquets to herself, letting them bounce back and hit her. They proclaimed their perfections, each after his own style. Mr Lloyd George plastered the world with telegrams conveying the good tidings, that he might publish in his doped and venal press the felicitations that were showered upon him. The Lord Chancellor loftily reproved the Ulster Parliament for doing its duty, and was properly rebuked by Sir James Craig. Mr Austen Chamberlain kindly repeated what he had said before, that Ulster was mistress of her fate; and none who reads the precious terms that have been signed by the British Cabinet and the representatives of the gunmen with candour will be able to agree with him. He further declared that the Irish question was settled only because Great Britain was happy enough to live under a coalition. We readily agree with him. Mr Lloyd George's settlement was possible only because he had suppressed plain-spoken discussion everywhere—in the press and in the Commons. Had there been from the first the wholesome criticism which party government ensures, Mr Lloyd George and his friends would not now be lying in the bath of treacle from which they are unlikely to emerge. The Coalition, "a body without principle, respect, or honour," to use Mr Chamberlain's phrase, has compassed the humiliation of Great Britain, and the sooner we rid ourselves of an infamous tyranny the better.

And when all the shouting is over, when the bouquets, flung against the wall, are withered and battered, what then? It is not the end of the story. Valera and Mike Collins and Mr Lloyd George are not going to live happy ever after. Eternal happiness and abounding prosperity will not shine instantly upon the world because after months of futile argument the British Ministers were able to entice upon paper the hieroglyphic signatures of the Junta's plenipotentiaries. A week before Mr Lloyd George had still been "exploring avenues," which stand in no need of exploration, and devising formulæ, and

he had been doing all this in vain. Then suddenly, by twisting the English tongue and confusing the plain rules of English grammar, he produced a dubious document which both parties signed, we suppose, because each party put upon it his own interpretation. But even if there were a fair hope of peace, it would not be the hour of jubilation, but rather of humility. It is not the signing of the treaty which is of the first importance. What really matters is the spirit in which the treaty is carried out, and the measure of happiness which it brings to the contracting peoples. These simple truths are indifferent to Mr Lloyd George. By a piece of legerdemain he has got one hare-brained scheme off his hands, and with the Coalition to aid him, he is ready to attempt what his supporters in the press would call another "stunt." And whatever he does, whatever he proposes, you may be sure that its ultimate aim is votes.

One fatal objection to the "treaty" is that it is not signed by free and equal representatives. It is a "treaty" extorted on the one side by terror, accepted on the other in fear and trembling. There is no hint in it of goodwill or the "union of hearts." Mike Collins makes no secret of his opinion. At the very moment when Mr Lloyd George was covering himself with praise, Collins told the truth, as he saw it, from his own point of view. Ireland, said he, "after centuries of political struggle and armed conflict, has won independence." His motto is still defiance, and there is not a man in the Cabinet to gainsay him, for the truth is that the triumph is not Mr Lloyd George's. It is a triumph of the gunmen. Assassination has taken an exalted place in the management of our affairs, and has been rewarded by complete surrender. The murdering of old ladies and the torturing of men have proved paying concerns, and for this reason, even were it the only one, the "treaty" between Great Britain and Ireland would be doomed to fail. It is a pact made with criminals, and signed in the blood of unavenged and murdered Englishmen. And the criminals with whom the pact is made are the more deeply culpable, because they are excused by their friends as political criminals. There are not such things as political criminals. The lust of blood is the same vile impulse, wherever it be found; and the Sadist who excuses his enormities on the ground of politics does but add hypocrisy to the crime of murder. "I never thought," said Lord Carson, when he read the terms, "I should live to see a day of such abject humiliation for Great Britain." And all good Englishmen will think with Lord Carson.

However, Mr Lloyd George, by hook or by crook, secured the signatures of the gunmen, and he returned thanks to

himself before he knew whether the "treaty" had been accepted, and without any power of foretelling what its result would be. So far it is but a paper treaty, and if we take it on its face value, it will not give much comfort to any save politicians and gunmen. The very title is ominous—"Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland." Here is the acknowledgment which the gunmen have clamoured for from the outset. Ireland, then, is already a separate country, and no part of the United Kingdom. Henceforth, if it please the Irish to murder and to burn, they may plead that their crimes are acts of war, waged against a foreign foe. To have wrested this confession, false though it be to history and to good sense, was worth doing, even though the widely advertised peace ends in a swift renewal of assassination. And let it be remembered also that "Ireland" in the title means Sinn Fein alone. The Southern Unionists are not signatories of the peace; the men of Ulster, having been maligned for weeks by the Ministerial press, are no parties to the conspiracy. Sinn Fein is Ireland, and Ireland is Sinn Fein, because Sinn Fein fired the pistols and threw the bombs which persuaded Mr Lloyd George to forget the murder-gang, and which wiped St Crispin's Day from the facile mind of Galloper Smith.

Some time since we were told that it was Mr Lloyd George's policy to swap Ulster for the oath of allegiance. Whatever fate may be in store for Ulster, there is no doubt that the Sinn Feiners have avoided the duty of taking the oath of allegiance. So far as the bad grammar of Article 4 permits us to understand it, the oath which the Irish will be asked to take is not an oath of allegiance to the King at all. A loyal citizen does not limit the loyalty which he owes to his monarch with "if's" and "but's." Nothing more ungracious have we ever seen than the pretended allegiance contained in Mr Lloyd George's preposterous "treaty." This, we suppose, is the avenue which he explored, this the formula which he devised. By a piece of gross bad manners, the members of the new Parliament, if ever they meet, first of all "do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State." That is intelligible so far as it goes. The members of the Irish Free State will keep faith with their Parliament until an actual minority fails to get what it wants immediately, and then the gunmen will be summoned once more to the minority's aid. And then, as an afterthought, the King is remembered. The members of the new Parliament, having taken the only oath that matters to them, are amiable enough to swear that they "will be faithful to H.M. King George V., his heirs and successors by law." But lest this generosity

should too much dazzle the eyes and the ears of subservient Britain, the magnanimous Irish hasten to add an explanation which they hope may appease their compatriots, and which, of course, the British Cabinet accepted without question. If the Irish consent to be faithful to King George V., it is not from respect to the Crown or acquiescence in the constitution of the once United Kingdom. It is merely "in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain, and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations." What that cryptic sentence means, who shall say? We are not told what is meant by citizenship, nor who is "her." But it was doubtless useful as an "avenue," and doubtless also it appeared perfect as a formula to those gentlemen who devised it. Why, then, should we ask whether it assures the fidelity to the throne of those who have won their independence, as they boast, by the pistol and the bomb?

Meanwhile Ulster is not to be coerced. She is merely put into such a position that if she refuses to do as she is told, the doped press will get its orders to insult and misrepresent her. This doubtless she can bear; she can bear also the boycott and the bomb, wherewith the Sinn Feiners will assail her, if she come not to heel. It will be difficult for her to shoulder the high taxation imposed by Great Britain, if Southern Ireland, wholly careless of her responsibilities, cuts down the income tax to a shilling and takes her chance. But look what a marvellous prospect lies ahead of Ulster. She has a whole month's grace after the ratification of Mr Lloyd George's precious instrument! And if before that month is up, Northern Ireland declines to accept the unutterable blessings of government by Sinn Fein, she will be permitted still to administer the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, provided that the boundaries between her and the rest of Ireland be determined afresh. If, on the other hand, she consent to put her neck under the heel of the gentlemen who are wont to throw bombshells into her tramcars, she is offered certain safeguards—safeguards with regard to patronage in Northern Ireland, safeguards with regard to the collection of revenue as well as to import and export duties affecting the trade or industry of Northern Ireland, safeguards for minorities. And when the safeguards are given, is there any one who believes that they would be of the smallest weight or value?

That is the worst of it; a peace extorted by fear cannot rest on any sure foundation. Shall you trust the word of those who compassed or approved the murder of Mrs Lindsay? Shall we declare that the rascal who tortured and assassinated is incapable

of telling a lie? Suppose Ireland (or that portion of Ireland which the British Cabinet is kind enough to designate by the name) obtain her dominion home rule. Suppose, as is exceedingly likely to be the case, she repudiates the simulacrum of an oath which to-day she says she will take. Suppose she refuse (as she will refuse) to pay her share of the National Debt or the proportion of war pensions, as may be determined, we shall be no better off because certain signatures, mostly unintelligible, we suspect, even to the writers themselves—why, for instance, does Gavin Duffy want twenty-one letters to spell his name with?—stand upon a piece of parchment. The whole dreary business will begin again. We shall be called upon once more to surrender, and bring a fresh shame upon ourselves, or we shall be forced to send an army into Ireland to ensure the keeping of a wicked treaty.

Nor, even in the most favourable circumstances, can the present settlement hope to endure. The Irish rebels pretend to believe that there can be no limit to the aspiration of a nation, and Mr Lloyd George's treaty imposes several limits. The oath of allegiance, sham and shadow though it be, will irk many a gallant gunner; and the presence of a representative of the Crown, appointed by the British Government, will be a stumbling-block until it be removed. Moreover, we have no guarantee that the men who signed the treaty will be politically in existence a month hence. The workers are waiting for them with their proposals of violence and their hopes of Soviet government. And Mike Collins and his friends have shown these, who are extreme even beyond their extremity, the way of success. A government founded on violence by violence may be overcome, and before many weeks are over we may be asked by Valera himself to come over to protect him and his dreary followers against the monster which their own cruelty has created. It is a pleasant prospect, which assuredly was banished from the eyes of Mr Lloyd George, when he undertook the happy task of covering himself and his colleagues with triumphal garlands.

So Mr Lloyd George, his head encircled with the bays of his own putting on, proclaimed as an accomplished fact a vast plan for the disruption of the Empire—a plan which had not received the approval of Parliament. The triumph, which set him beyond criticism and above the law, was short-lived. Within eight-and-forty hours he suffered the fate which overtakes all those who yield to the blackmailer. "I want a thousand pounds," said a famous blackmailer to his victim, "for the suppression of an article already written." The victim paid the fine grudgingly. "And now," added the *maître chanteur*, "give me an-

other thousand for the article which I shall write to-morrow." Mr Lloyd George is suffering the discomfort which always afflicts him who yields to the pressure of murder or extortion. He has done what he could. He has substituted for the allegiance to the Throne an allegiance to the Free Irish State, with conditional faithfulness to King George, "in virtue" of something or other. But he has not satisfied the intemperate wishes of the Sinn Feiners. "Be not misled into rejoicing and thanksgiving without cause or reason," wrote Mr Art O'Brien, who kindly represents Sinn Fein in London. "The claim of the people of Ireland is, and always has been, the recognition of the complete independence of their country. . . . If under the threat of renewed and intensified warfare, and as an alternative to seeing their country ravished by fire and sword and their race exterminated, five Irishmen have been compelled to sign their names to the document published on Wednesday, that is not a cause for us to rejoice or a reason for us to offer thanksgiving." The English, thinks this ingenuous personage, have won another round. We wish they had. But Ireland's time will come!

That a spokesman of Sinn Fein would use these words we all knew, save the British Cabinet and the servile band of citizens who have been duped by false news. The marvellous settlement achieved by those great and consistent patriots, Mr Lloyd George and Lord Birkenhead, is accepted by the Irish merely as something on account. It will ensure neither peace nor tranquillity. One more milestone has been passed, thinks Sinn Fein, and the gunmen must prepare for the next advance upon the goal. Their task will be all the easier presently, because the British soldiers will be withdrawn from Ireland, and the gunmen will have nobody to fight with save the men of Ulster, whose sacrifice the British Government contemplate with equanimity, and the old-fashioned Sinn Feiner who will not carry his contumacy a foot further.

While Mr Art O'Brien speaks the words, which we knew would be spoken within a few hours of the boasted and boastful settlement, Valera, that eminent Gael, has openly and loudly refused the proffered gift. So deeply has he committed himself to the demand of complete independence that he cannot accept Mr Lloyd George's thinly-disguised substitute. Had he accepted it, how foolish would appear the brave words which he has addressed to the Pope and others. No doubt he has a difficult part to play. He whose policy it is to inflame the minds of men can never control the conflagration which is the result of that policy, and Valera was not long in

discovering his danger. "I feel it my duty," said he, "to inform you immediately that I cannot recommend acceptance of this treaty either to Dail Eireann or the country. . . . Members of the Cabinet, though divided in opinion, are prepared to carry on the public services as usual. The army, as such, is, of course, not affected by the political situation, and continues under the same orders." In other words, the gunmen are ready to do what is expected of them, and bring the offending ministers to heel. And then Valera rises to a height of unaccustomed sentiment. "The great test of our people has come," says he. That test has come very often, on bloody Sunday, for instance, and on that splendid day for Ireland, when Mrs Lindsay was tortured and butchered. However, Valera is not dismayed. "Let us face it worthily," he entreats, "without bitterness, and, above all, without recriminations. There is a definite constitutional way of resolving our difficulties," —there is, for instance, shooting in Belfast. "Let us not depart from it, and let the conduct of the Cabinet in this matter be an example to the whole nation." We cannot pretend to deplore the split in the ranks of Sinn Fein. When knaves fall out, sometimes the honest men come to their own.

However the comedy ends, and they will win assuredly who can get and keep the gunmen on their side, it is certain that the members of the British Cabinet were precipitate, as well as unconstitutional, in claiming success for a project which had not been put before the House of Commons. But at least it may be said that Mr Lloyd George was true to his unvarying principle of espousing the cause of his country's enemies. The men of Ulster fought bravely for the Empire, to which they were once proud to belong. Therefore they may be treated as roughly as the British Cabinet thinks well to treat them. They may be insulted daily and loudly in the suborned press. Their intentions may be misrepresented long before they have been publicly expressed. Nothing that they say or leave unsaid is right, because they may interfere with the *beau geste* which Mr Lloyd George is determined to contrive at their expense. When the "treaty" hung in the balance, the men of Ulster were denounced as wreckers, although at that time the Sinn Feiners had refused to make the smallest concession. How differently did the press treat Valera when he advised his friends to have nothing to do with the terms of the British surrender! They handled his objections with a kind of tenderness. He seemed a man to be reckoned with. He had collected votes by the firm use of the pistol; he had taken a foremost part in the Easter rebellion; he had done his best to embarrass England when she was fighting the Germans. Wherefore the Brit-

ish Cabinet had every reason to respect him. Why should it respect Sir James Craig and the men of Ulster, who had merely done their duty to their King and the Empire?

The same policy which the Cabinet has followed at home it has followed abroad. By all the laws of honour and comradeship we should be bound in the bonds of amity to France and the French. Side by side the British and the French fought the Germans. By the valour of our armies we saved the civilisation of Europe, and as we shared the burden so should we share the fruits of victory. And what has happened? The French, once our friends, can, in the eyes of our governors, do nothing right. With eagerness does Mr Lloyd George, supported by all his Jewish colleagues, turn his eyes towards Germany. The Germans, like the Sinn Feiners, were and remain our enemies. Therefore let us buckle them to our breasts, and, still better, let us trade with them. It is characteristic of the shopkeeping spirit, which dominates us, that no sooner was there a rumour of an Irish settlement than the interested Press began with one accord to talk of the next tourist season, and urge our British capitalists to invest money in Irish hotels. And with a similar cunning the politicians urge us to set Germany on her legs again, and to forgive her her debts, in order that without any further delay we may make a comfortable sum of money out of her. These are the methods of commerce, not of statesmanship, and naturally the French, who are Germany's neighbours, are unwilling that she should be restored to strength and prosperity for the mere purpose of trading with Great Britain.

But France three years ago was our friend, as Ulster was our friend, and therefore is not worth treating with justice or generosity. While we welcome Herr Stinnes to London, we make it clear to France that we will give her small encouragement if she dares to defend herself against the attack of a resuscitated Germany. It is easy for us to be magnanimous towards the Boche. He threatens us nowhere. His colonies are gone from him, and his ships of war are at the bottom of the sea. But he stands on guard across the French frontier, ready, when he is rich enough and strong enough, to make an attack upon the enemy who for four long years bore the brunt of his assault. Plainly, therefore, it was in accord with Mr Lloyd George's practice to insult France. M. Briand went to Washington to plead the cause and to explain the necessities of his country. The wise words which he spoke were echoed and approved by Mr Balfour with a chivalry which belonged to a wiser, better age than ours. And then, lest France should be unduly elated by the support of a British statesman, Lord Curzon rose up in his majesty

and addressed France as an usher might address a fourth-form boy. He brought the charge against France that she had acted behind our back, as though we had ourselves never made terms with the unspeakable Krassin, as though we had not followed our own policy in Greece, without consultation with our ally. More than this, we have withdrawn the guarantee which, with the United States, we offered to France after the making of the peace, on the pretext that, as the United States has not fulfilled her promise, we are absolved from fulfilling ours. What course, then, can France follow, except the course of putting herself in a proper state of defence? She knows now that the British Government is far more deeply interested in doing what Herr Rathenau and Herr Stinnes tell her to do than in helping to restore prosperity to her invaded and broken land. She knows also that she cannot rely upon the continuity of British policy. Our Cabinet speaks with many voices. It is far too busy in disagreeing with itself to keep peace with its neighbours, and France may be excused if she refuse to accept the unsupported promises of Mr Lloyd George. For she knows well that if ever in public he says a civil thing about France, he will gather Germany to his breast, most effusively, on the next day.

It is perhaps superfluous to point out that we are bound in honour and by a common sacrifice to take the part of France against Germany. They are no good judges of the virtue who regard Mike Collins as a man of honour. But even if we leave honour out of the question, the destruction or absorption of France would go far to destroy the civilisation of Europe. Prussia has never been civilised, is probably incapable of civilisation. As Napoleon said many years ago, she is a menace to the peace of Europe, and no more. France and England, on the other hand, have been friends in arts, even when they have been rivals in arms. They have fought loyally, and when peace came again they have thought it no shame to learn, each from the other, what lessons they had to teach, and they have submitted, without reserve, to one another's influence. The debt which Chaucer owed to France was repaid with a lavish hand when the romantic movement in France borrowed its ideas from the English master of prose and verse. And now it is left to our men of letters and to the English people itself to knit the bonds of union closer than ever, despite the malign cunning of the politicians. Mr Lloyd George and Lord Curzon may look down with magisterial scorn upon the only true ally that is left us. But the reception of Sir James Frazer and Mr Kipling at the Sorbonne, the help gloriously given by the towns of England to the devastated villages and

cities of France, will more than counteract the hostility of a discredited Government. By this time let us hope that France has pierced the mystery of our prevailing policy—to make friends of enemies and enemies of friends. France and Ulster stood by our side when we fought the Germans. So let us sacrifice France to the Boche and Ulster to Sinn Fein. Moreover, Mr Lloyd George is not a tenant for life of the prime ministry, and when sanity and loyalty return to these shores, France will understand that she still retains the friendship of the English people, and Ulster will triumph over her base and pampered foes.

To turn back sixty years, to the time when Disraeli and Lord Salisbury managed the affairs of the Empire, is to discover a country unknown to our politicians of to-day. The game of politics as played by our fathers was not the game which is now being played. It was still controlled by the rules of principle and morality. It would have been impossible that either Disraeli or Lord Salisbury should have sat in conference with rebels and murderers. They could not have condoned a blow aimed at the heart of England at the very moment when England was at war with an efficient, implacable enemy. Wherefore it is a pleasure, not untouched by regret, to read the 'Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury,' as told by his daughter, Lady Gwendolen Cecil. Yet, as we read, the pleasure of reading a worthy work, worthily accomplished, makes us oblivious for a while of the regret that we are reading of times that are gone, and which, without a brave reaction, will not, for a while at least, recur. Lady Gwendolen has achieved a conspicuous success in a very difficult kind of literature. Her style of writing is at once characteristic and distinguished. In judgment she is well-balanced and impartial. She has accomplished what might have seemed impossible: she has written of her father with a perfect detachment, which permits her to criticise his words and acts fairly and sympathetically. Moreover, she has a deep knowledge and a firm grasp of political principles, and her book would have a great value, even apart from the career of Lord Salisbury, were politics any longer deemed worthy of study. From one point of view her book is too rigidly political. The drama which she has composed has but a vague background. Even the *dramatis personæ* exist chiefly as statesmen and debaters. We get the impression, certainly erroneous, that the chief actors in the play enjoyed a free existence only in the Houses of Parliament or in the council chamber. But there is no doubt about the soundness of Lady Gwendolen's politics, and if ladies must sit among the Commons, we would that a place in that sad enslaved House could be found for her.

Lord Robert Cecil, to use the name under which he first came before the world, was educated at Eton, which he disliked, and at Oxford, where he learned the first lessons of public discussion and political controversy, and where he strengthened the uncompromising Toryism which was in his blood. After he left Oxford he travelled to Australia, and appreciated the virtues of his own country and countrymen as represented at the diggings. "The most interesting point of view," he wrote in July 1851, "in which the diggings appeared was the marked contrast they presented to California. The rush of population was nearly if not quite as great; the temptations to come were as powerful; the country in which the gold lay was as wild and desolate; but the Government was of the Queen, not of the mob; from above, not from below, holding from a supposed right (whether real or not, no matter), and not from 'the people, the source of all legitimate power,' and *therefore* instead of murders, rapes, and robberies daily, lynch law and a Committee of Vigilance, there was less crime than in a large English town, and more order and civility than I have witnessed in my own native village of Hatfield." On his return from Australia he betook himself to writing as a profession, contributed to the 'Saturday Review' and the 'Quarterly,' where he infinitely increased his powers of thought and expression, and laid the foundation of a knowledge of politics long before he was called to the service of his country. He was averse from change naturally, and from the outset, even though the reasons which he found for walking in the old ways seemed paradoxical. He opposed, as in duty bound, all attempts at University reform, thinking rightly that ancient endowments should not be interfered with. His opposition to the Jew Bill was supported by an argument which shows that he was one of very few who at that time had any understanding of the Semitic question. "Supporters of the Bill," writes Lady Gwendolen, "argued that it was only the sincere Jew who was kept out by the oath; and Lord Robert replied that it was the sincere Jew whom he pre-eminently dreaded. In proportion to his sincerity, he must take a view 'hostile to their whole body, and to all their institutions'—must be 'opposed to all in a religious sense that they were there to uphold.'"

With an equal wisdom he criticised adversely the system of competitive examination, which in the eyes of the radicals was to save the Government service. He defined it accurately as a system for the bestowing of appointments, not upon persons who were qualified for them, but upon those who had shown their fitness for something else. When it was proposed to beau-

tify London by building the Thames Embankment, Lord Salisbury protested vigorously against the change. "He was moved to indignation," says his biographer, "by the demands made upon Parliament on the authority of 'men of taste,' whom he declared to be 'the most incorrigible depredators on the public purse that had ever cursed an economic House of Commons.'" And when he was called a Philistine for his pains, he accepted the title gladly, and defined it, with a wit all his own, as "he who is assailed by the jawbone of an ass." It is not strange then that, holding these views, he came into a House of Commons, in 1853, which he thought unsympathetic. "A pretty state I found things in when I got to England. I had not heard any news for eight months, so I fully expected to find My Lord in office, instead of this Happy Family of old Tories, Liberal-Conservatives, Whigs and Radicals, Churchmen, Presbyterians and Hobbists. Everybody seems to have quarrelled. Without any definite line of policy or clear political creed, there seems to be more personal animosity than ever there was in 1846." And the personal animosity did not decrease when Lord Robert Cecil entered upon the scene.

It was his inflexibility of opinion which made Lord Robert distrust and dislike Disraeli. Although when Lord Robert came into the House Disraeli had won the leadership of the Tory party, and had overcome the prejudices which he had once inspired even in those who fought with him, he found a new enemy in Lord Robert. Disraeli was put by this young Tory in the category of new men and new things. Moreover, Disraeli had no fear of democracy; he faced the extension of the franchise with equanimity. And Lord Robert had a wise and sound fear of what is falsely called the "people"—a fear which time has justified. He had a proper dread of that complete divorce between power and responsibility which would ultimately be reached when "the rich would pay all the taxes and the poor make all the laws." He foresaw that "the bestowal upon any class of a voting power disproportionate to their stake in the country must infallibly give to that class a power *pro tanto* of using taxation as an instrument of plunder, and expenditure and legislation as a fountain of gain." He insisted that "if universal suffrage were to invest one class with despotic power, it would be subjected to the temptation to which all despots are liable, and must be expected on occasions to succumb to them." Lord Robert's view is intelligible, and, we believe, the only sane view in the long-run. But Disraeli, it must be remembered, was never afraid of an extended franchise, and if in 1867 he stole the Whigs' clothes, he had them mended and newly cut before he put them on. Nor was there

anything in the situation of 1867 which justified the acrimony of Lord Robert. There was mixed up with his criticism the violence which came from a natural incompatibility, and which throws our sympathy on to the side of Disraeli. Even at the Congress of Berlin Disraeli failed to win the approval of his colleague, who assuredly did not agree with Bismarck that the old Jew was the man. "There is no news," wrote Lord Salisbury on 23rd June 1878, "since I wrote yesterday, except that my chief is distressing himself very much about the supposed designs of Bismarck. What with deafness, ignorance of French, and Bismarck's extraordinary mode of speech, Beaconsfield has the dimmest idea of what is going on, understands everything cross ways, and imagines a perpetual conspiracy." And Lord Salisbury will not even assign to Lord Beaconsfield the credit for the annexation of Cyprus. He forgets that Disraeli had suggested this annexation, in 'Tancred,' as early as 1847.

If we exclude a few chapters, the greater part of Lady Gwendolen Cecil's book is concerned with two episodes only —the Franchise Bill of 1867, and the perplexities of the Eastern question which preceded the Congress of Berlin. The earlier episode is a triumph for the tact and adroitness of Disraeli; the latter episode reflects little glory upon any one, until the *dénouement* of Berlin. If the British Cabinet ever had a policy in the East, the inactivity of Lord Derby, the foreign minister, made that policy of no effect. It was rarely indeed that Lord Derby was able to make up his mind, and if by chance he made it up, the labour of expressing what he thought in words or on paper was too great for him. Yet the patience of Lord Beaconsfield did not wear out until the end; and though an early dismissal of his incompetent colleague would have been useful for the country, it is impossible not to admire Beaconsfield's forbearance. And if he was forbearing to Lord Derby, he was forbearing also to Lord Salisbury. In the strife which was waged between these two incompatibles, it was Beaconsfield who always got the better of it—in politeness throughout, and at the last in winning over his adversary. It is as well that we have Mr Buckle's fifth and sixth volumes to check and to add to Lord Salisbury's own narrative. And it is with the greatest confidence that we commend Lady Gwendolen's 'Life' of her father, both as a piece of political history and as the adequate presentation of a great figure.

Printed in Great Britain by
WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.